

The Evolution of Slave Island, Ceylon



Exhibit
A display exhibit of Slave Island, showing the evolution of the town through its mail and relevant collateral materials.

Background
The town of Slave Island is located just a mile outside of Colombo, the capital of the country now named Sri Lanka. Slave Island seems like an unlikely town name, particularly in this modern age. However unusual, the location name is still Slave Island, and it is a neighborhood within the city of Colombo today.

Scope
Beginning in the 1840s with the origin of the town name, the exhibit traces Slave Island mail processing and postmarks over time. Surprisingly, the post office remained named Slave Island for over 150 years.



Exhibit Plan
A. Pre-Stamp Mail
Local mail carried by runners
B. Victorian Slave Island
Area growth with business mail
C. Edward VII Slave Island
Shops and hotels, tourist mail
D. George V
Tourist mail and service change
E. George VI
Wartime mail and Airmail service
F. Queen Elizabeth
& Independence

Highlights
- Earliest known cover to Slave Island
- Tappal (mail runner) carried mail
- Earliest and latest recorded uses of Slave Island postmarks

Why the Name?
"Slave Island" derives its name from when the Portuguese brought slaves from East Africa to Ceylon in the 1600s. Under Portuguese and later Dutch rule, slaves were housed on this city island, which became known as Slave Island.

The British abolished slavery in 1845, and filled in portions of the lake. While Slave Island's use changed from military to business, to tourist and recreation, the post office remained operational and name unchanged.

Format
The right headings describe social history and postal aspects while left headings describe Slave Island postal markings. Earliest and latest recording of cancels used are in **green**, research is in **green**. Rarity is indicated by the items in **orange boxes**. The exhibit is ordered chronologically by monarchial reign, postmarks within the reign by type, and ordered by use: local, domestic, and foreign.
Reference to published recording of cancels: The Postal History of Ceylon by Ted Proud. Slave Island pages 375-376.

Geography and Background

Ceylon Slavery During Pre-British Rule
Slavery existed on Ceylon for over 200 years. The Portuguese brought more than 1,500 East Africans as slaves to Ceylon around 1630.

During Dutch rule, 1650s - 1796, **Slave Island housed over 4,000** African slaves.

The price of a slave?
Often slaves were traded for just a few coins. Horses cost more than slaves.



Ceylon native coin:
The "octopus man." of mid 1600s.



Alain Mallet's 1685
Description de L'Universe →
Drawn while serving the King of Portugal.
Portuguese "Isle Ceylan" located just below India. Shown on 1800s colorized map.



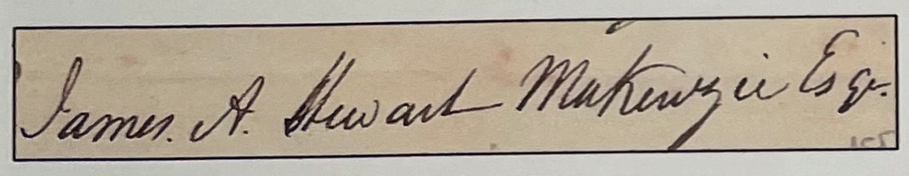
The Dutch stocked the waters with **"Monster Crocodiles"** to keep the slaves on the island by night.

Tucks Ceylon lithographed divided back post card.

A. Pre-Stamp Mail Background: British Administration

Ceylon became a British Crown Colony in 1815. British appointed James A. S. Mackenzie Governor of Ceylon. Mackenzie worked for years to abolish slavery in Ceylon.

Governor Mackenzie abolished slavery in Ceylon, but not until 1845.

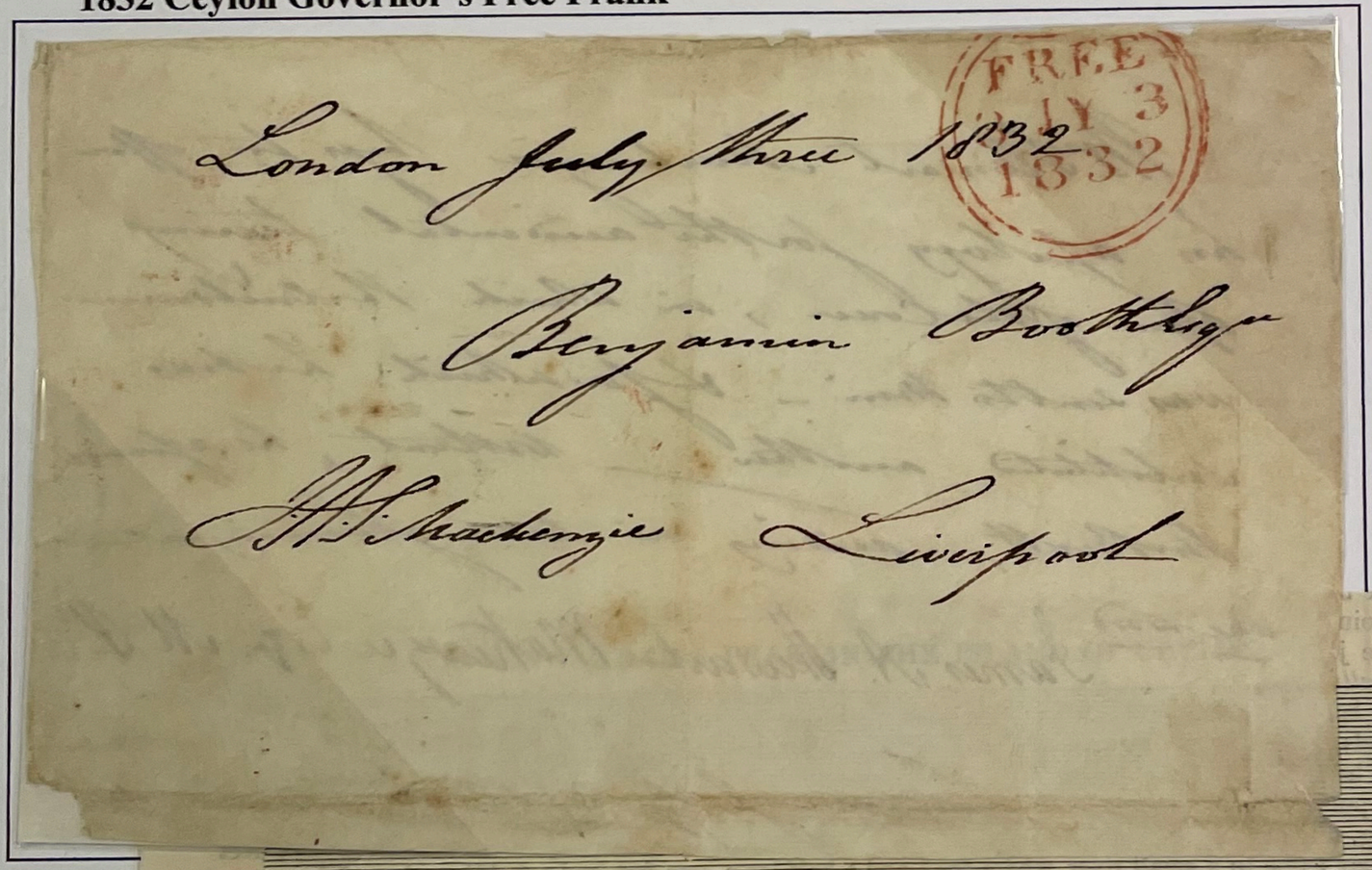


Mackenzie signature from reverse.

"Hence, let the eye a circuit take
Were gently sloping to the lake,
A smiling, lively scene appears,
A verdant isle, its bosom rears,
Have once, to all but int'rest blind,
*The Colonists their **slaves** confin'd;*
But now the name alone remains,
Gone are the scourges, racks and chains!'

—Ajax Anderson, "Wanderings in Ceylon" 1819

1832 Ceylon Governor's Free Frank



Mackenzie Free Frank front, London. July 3, 1832.

Slave Population Grows:

- 1800 4,000
- 1817 22,000
- 1837 27,000

View across waters to **Slave Island**



「Distant View of Adam's Peak from Fort Colombo Roads.」

A. Pre-Stamp Mail

Background: Slavery & Coffee

A. Pre-Stamp Mail

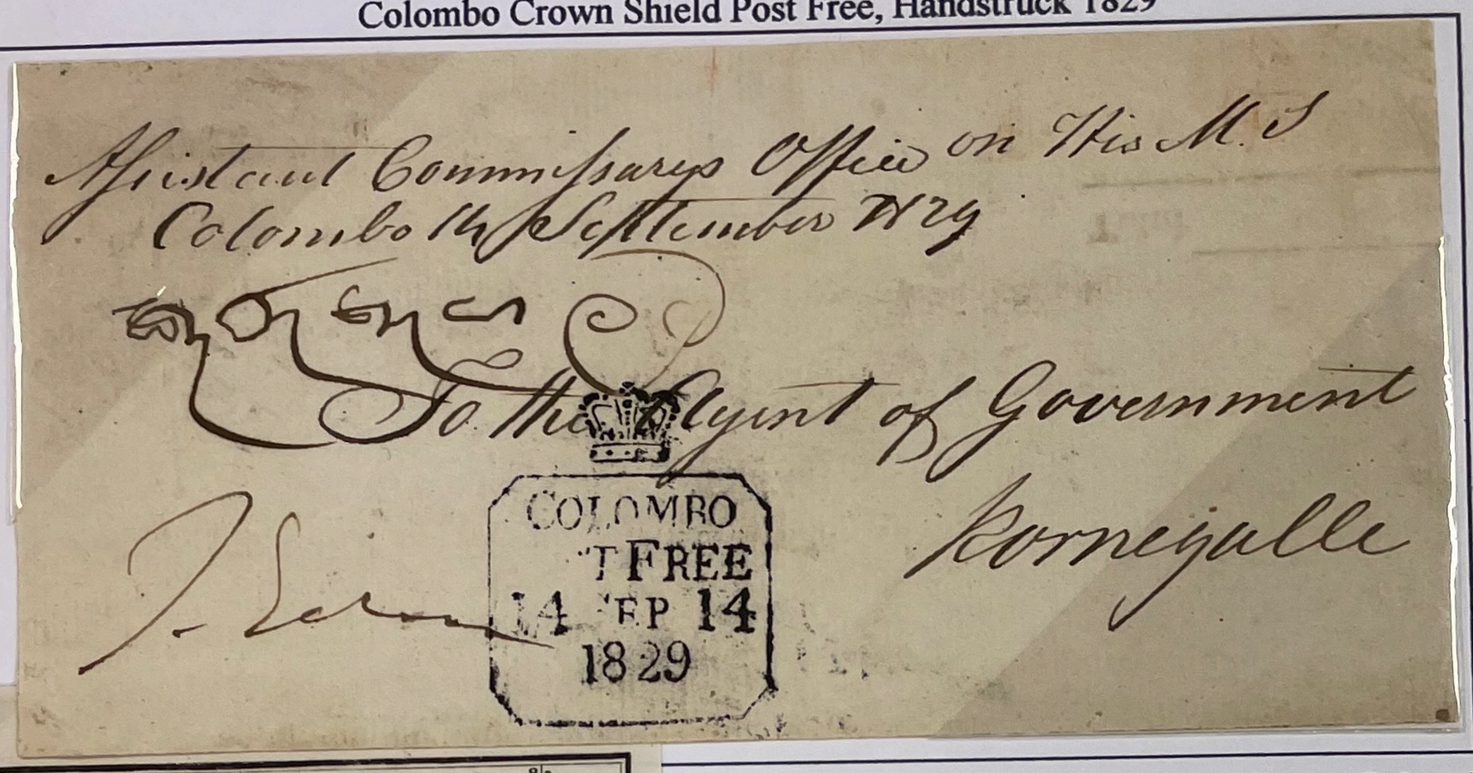
Before Slave Island's Post Office

Colombo Cancel for Slave Island Mail

Kornegalle, Ceylon
Interior Ceylon.
Colombo Post Free front September 14, 1829. Government offices on Slave Island sent their mail via Colombo GPO to their Government Agents.

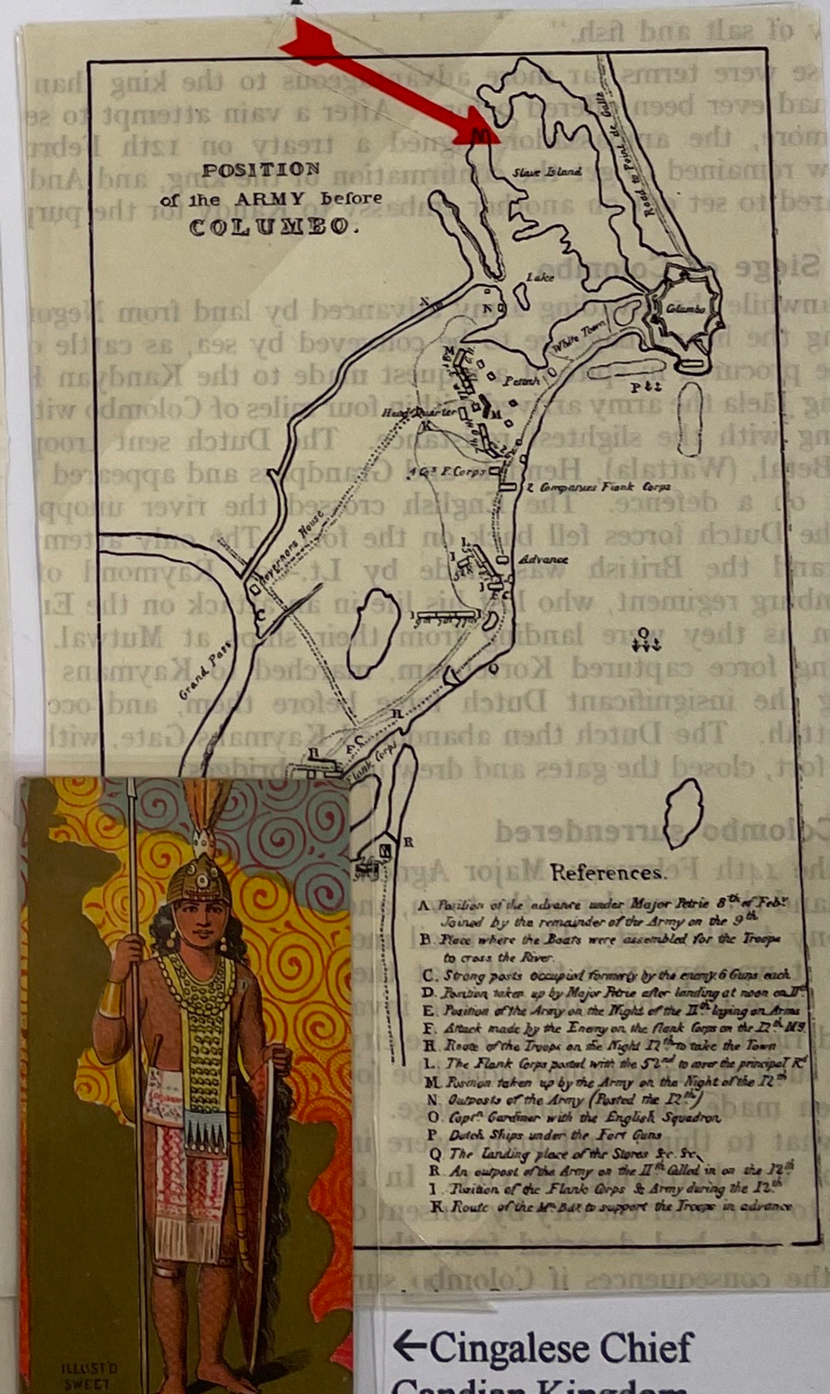
Original 1814 Map of Ceylon ↓

Colombo Crown Shield Post Free, Handstruck 1829





1800s Map of Colombo, Slave Island



←Cingalese Chief
Candian Kingdom

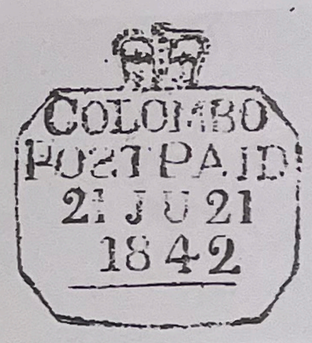
British control of Ceylon began in 1796, early settlement served passing ships. By 1820s, plantations expanded into the fertile interior of "Candian Ceylon" the early kingdom. **Plantation slaves, island wide, numbered 22,000 by 1817.**

A. Pre-Stamp Mail

Background: Slavery & Coffee

Processing Slave Island Mail

Slave Island is **located right within the city limits of capital city of Colombo, Ceylon**. To build a military garrison, the British government filled in a portion of Lake Beira which surrounded Slave Island. ***Slave Island was no longer an island.*** Slave Island became an in city area of government offices, businesses and hotels.

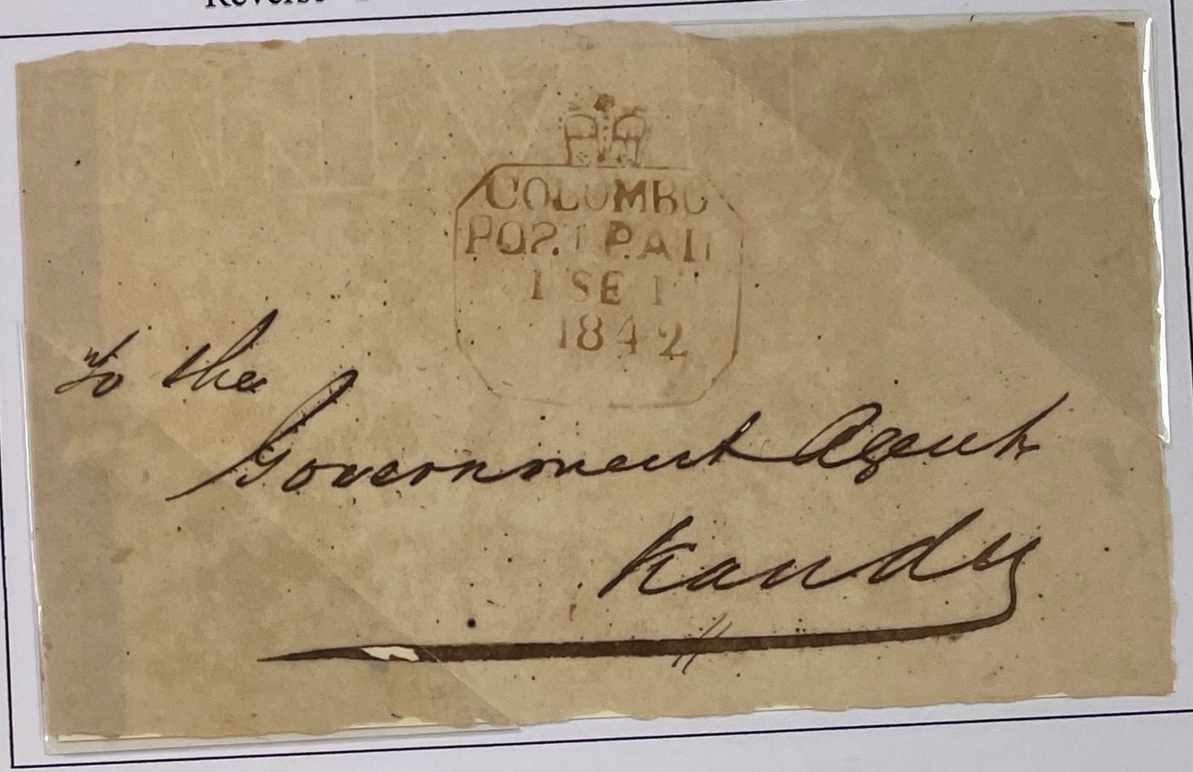


Government Agent mail:

Governmental offices built on **Slave Island used the Colombo GPO post office**.

1842 to Government Agent in Kandy, Ceylon. Heart of the coffee growing, later tea plantation area.

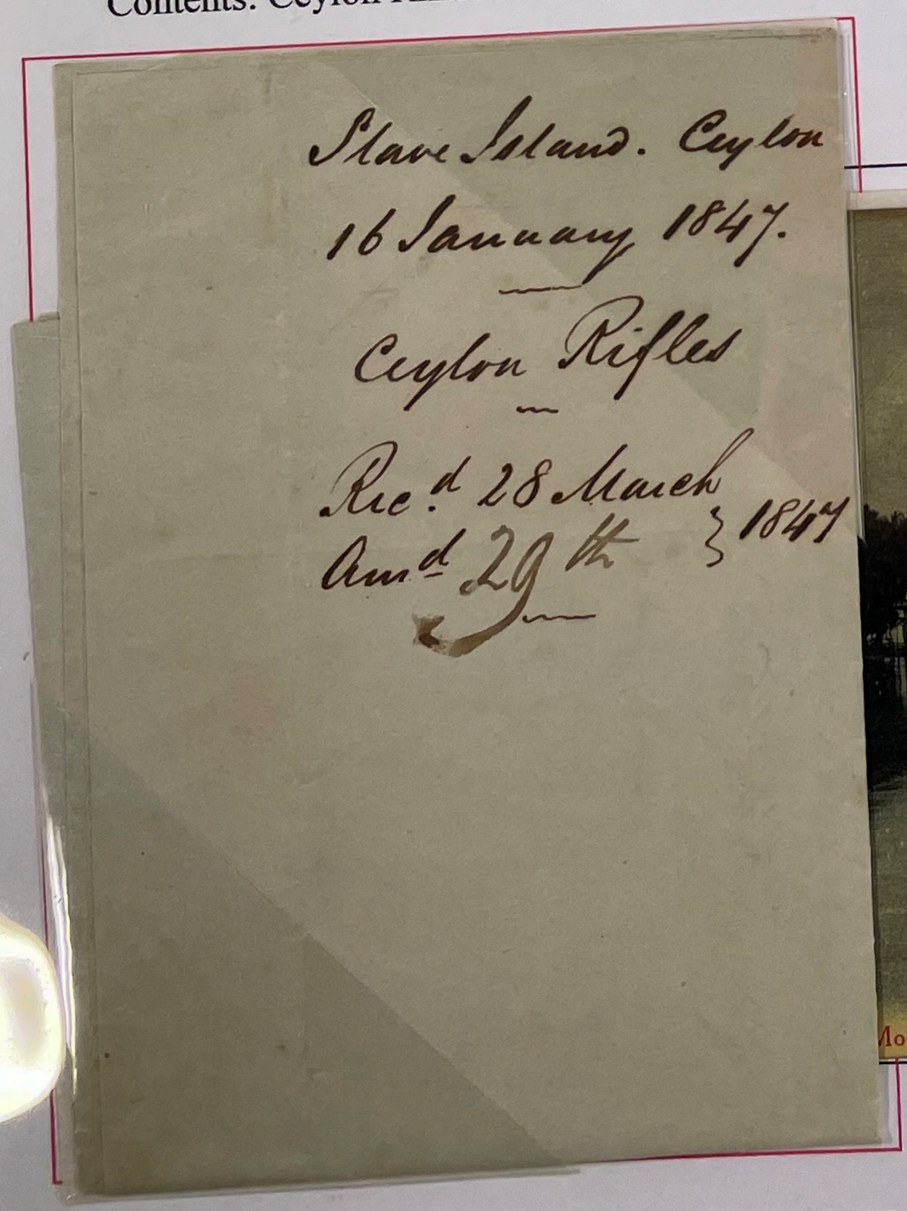
Reverse "S" Post Paid, Handstruck 1842 Cancel



First known **Slave Island letter**:
January 16, 1847
Contents: Ceylon Rifles Military Corps

Slave Island —
No longer an island

- Additional land created for government & recreational use
- Landfill of lake
- Expanded roadways
- Canals and bridges



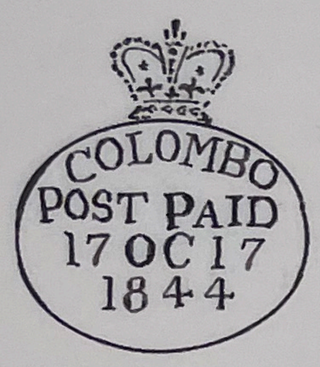


Lake and surrounding area Colombo, at Slave Island
RPPC local "Andree" post card.

A. Pre-Stamp Mail

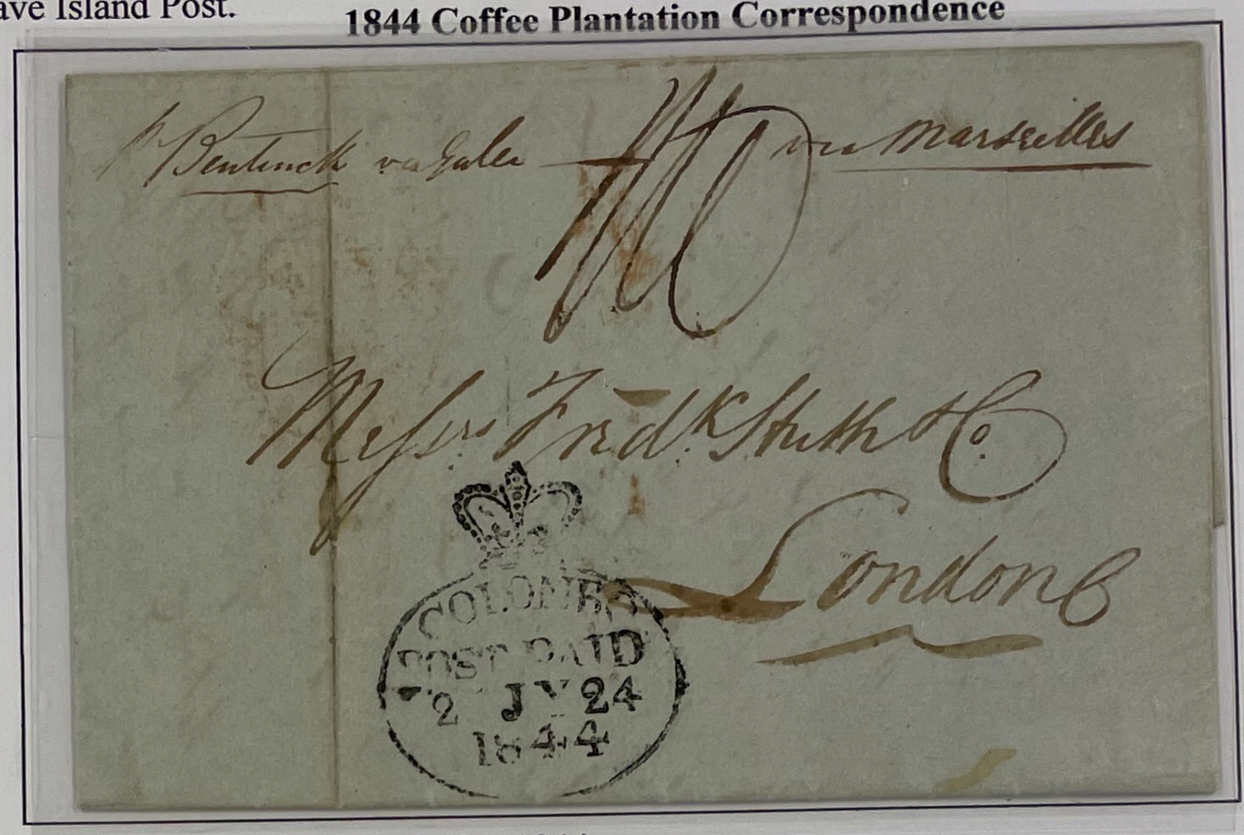
Background: Slavery & Coffee

British in Ceylon resisted abolishing slavery for decades. Slaves were living and working on the coffee plantations.
Shown here is Colombo mail before Slave Island Post.



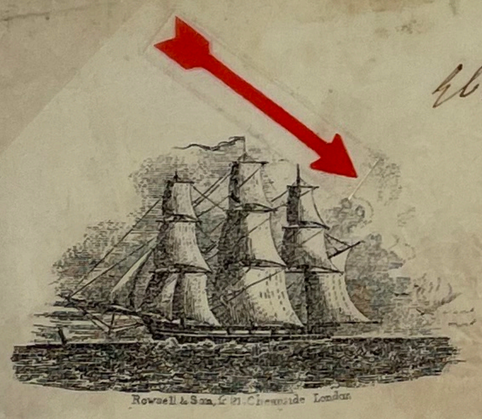
Sent one year before →
slavery was abolished

1844 Coffee Plantation Correspondence



↓ **Coffee** was big business -
Below: Shipping plantation grown coffee from Ceylon to London.
Bill with 6d Duty Revenue, embossed.

Colombo to London July 24, 1844:
1/10d with Colombo crowned oval. Rate 1/5d British packet rate and 5d for French transit. Backstamped September 11, 1844, 48 days transit.
Letter contents: Finding cargo space to ship Ceylon plantation coffee.



No 10
Thin

667, 18 6/12 70

Shipped in good Order and well conditioned by Army
in and upon the good Ship called the Pembrokes
whereof is Master for this present Voyage Hitkins
and now riding at Anchor in the Colombo Ro
Laydon.

Eleven Casks
Ten Barrels } Plantation Coffee
Cwts

Nunagoria	Cks	Bgs			
New	No 1.	4	1	Cwts 5. 1. 0.	
	2.	4	1.	3. 2. 3.	
	3.	9.	3.	96. 0. 11.	
	4.	4	2.	10. 0. 25	
	PB	4	2.	9. 0. 24	
	1/2	1.	1.	14. 1. 18.	
	2.				
	T	1	4	8. 1. 9.	
		11.	10.	144. 0. 6.	

being marked and numbered as in the Margin, and are to be deliv
and well conditioned at the aforesaid Port of London,
(the Act of God, the Queen's Enemies, Fire, & all and every other Dangers & Accidents of the Seas, Rivers & Nav
excepted, as per risk of Boats, so far as Ships are liable thereto) unto M. A. C
or to his Assigns paying Freight for the said Goods, ar
shillings per Ton of Cwts 16 net at the Da
In Witness whereof the Maste
Ship hath affirmed to three Bills of Lading all of this tenor and
three Bills being accomplished, the other two to stand vo
Dated in Colombo 21st February 1844. Rolus
Weight & Contents unknown

B. Victorian Slave Island

Earliest Indication of Town Name

Whether or not by design, **the name Slave Island adhered to the former island slave quarters**, it just stuck. Slave Island came to be just another of several well demarcated districts making up the capital, Colombo.

Early postal needs of this growing community, with population less than 2,000, generally could be serviced by the Colombo General Post Office located in the Fort, the district next to Slave Island within the city of Colombo.

1860: Earliest postal indication of town name of Slave Island known

Slave Island →
Cover sent 18 years prior to Slave Island having a post office.



Ex Hackmey

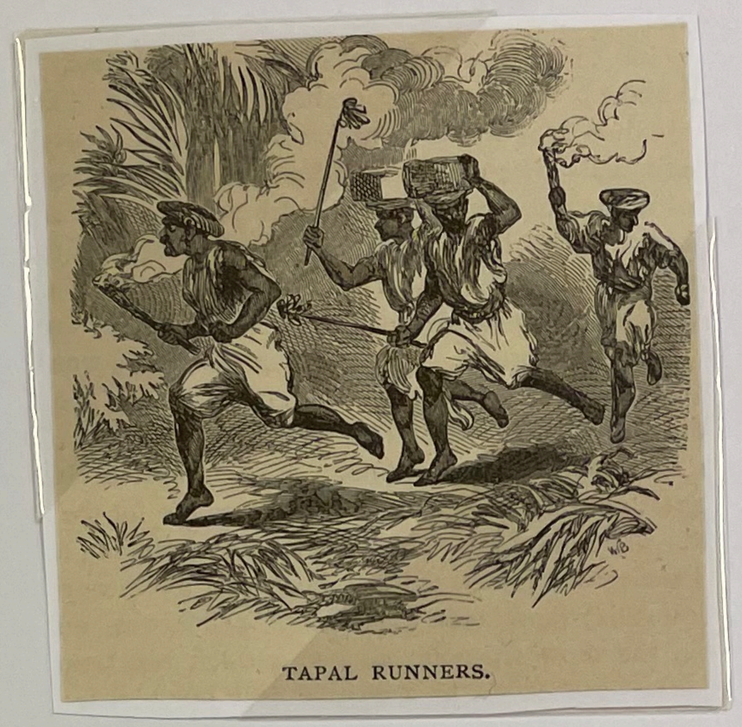
One pence local rate addressed to Slave Island, backstamped May 29, 1860.

Carving a city from the jungle:
Black & white relief line block print illustration of Colombo, Ceylon as seen in the 1860s.



COLOMBO.

B. Victorian Slave Island Delivering Mail to Slave Island



← **Tappal Runners:**
Mail delivery—one mile by foot.
Early Woodcut illustration.

1864 Evidence of Mail Delivery by Foot

"Friday – → Tappal"
Mail Delivery
Carried by tappel one mile to addressee.

Slave Island,
Colombo →

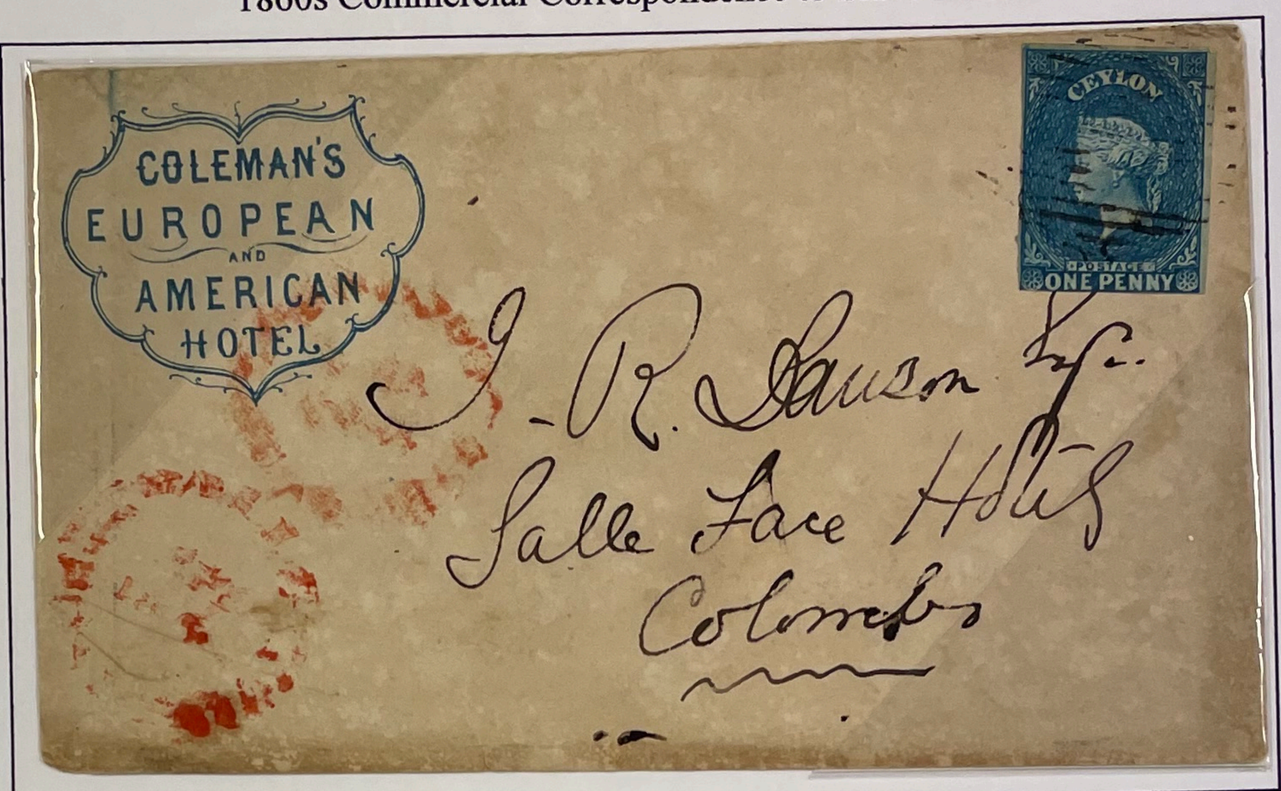


One pence local rate to Slave Island addressee. Paid stamp Nuwara Eliya November 18, 1864. Backstamped received Colombo November 20, 1864.

B. Victorian Slave Island

Domestic Mail

1860s Commercial Correspondence to Slave Island

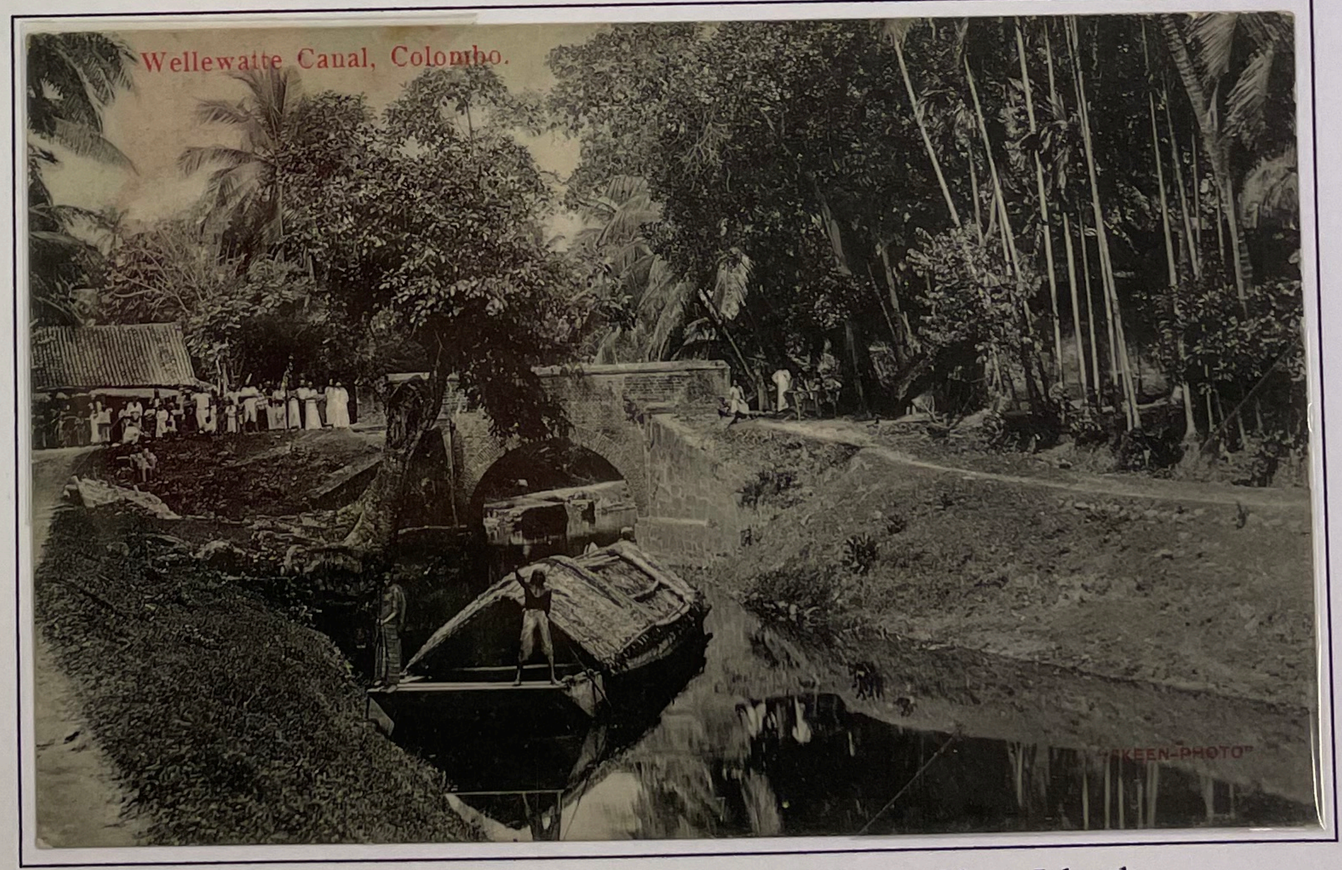


1860s One pence local rate commercial cover to the Galle Face Hotel, at Slave Island. Early addressing indicates appropriate post office, Colombo.

The Slave Island post office opened more than fifteen years later.

Engineering Slave Island →

The British enlarged Slave Island, removed the crocodiles from the waters, and improved access with bridges and canals.

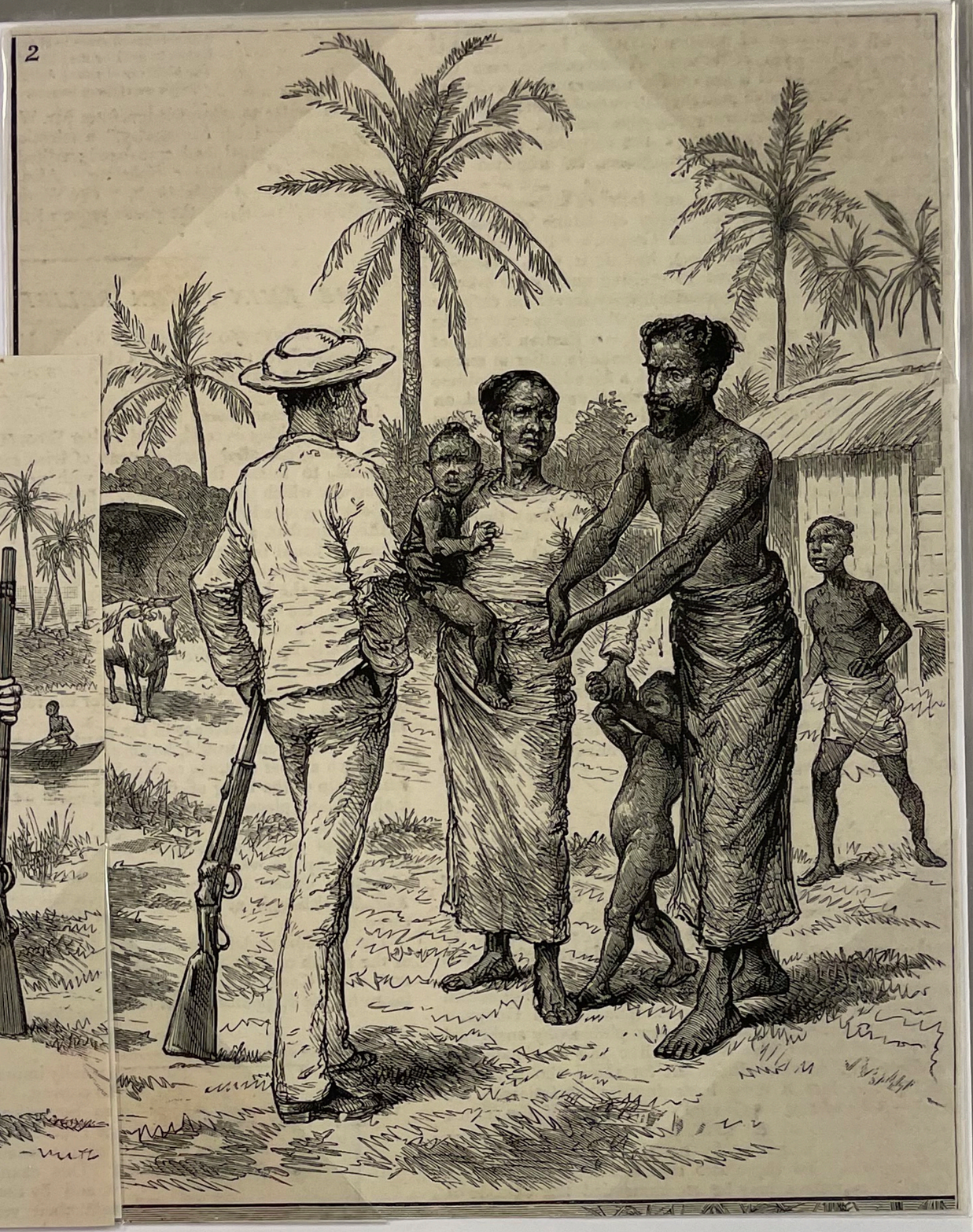


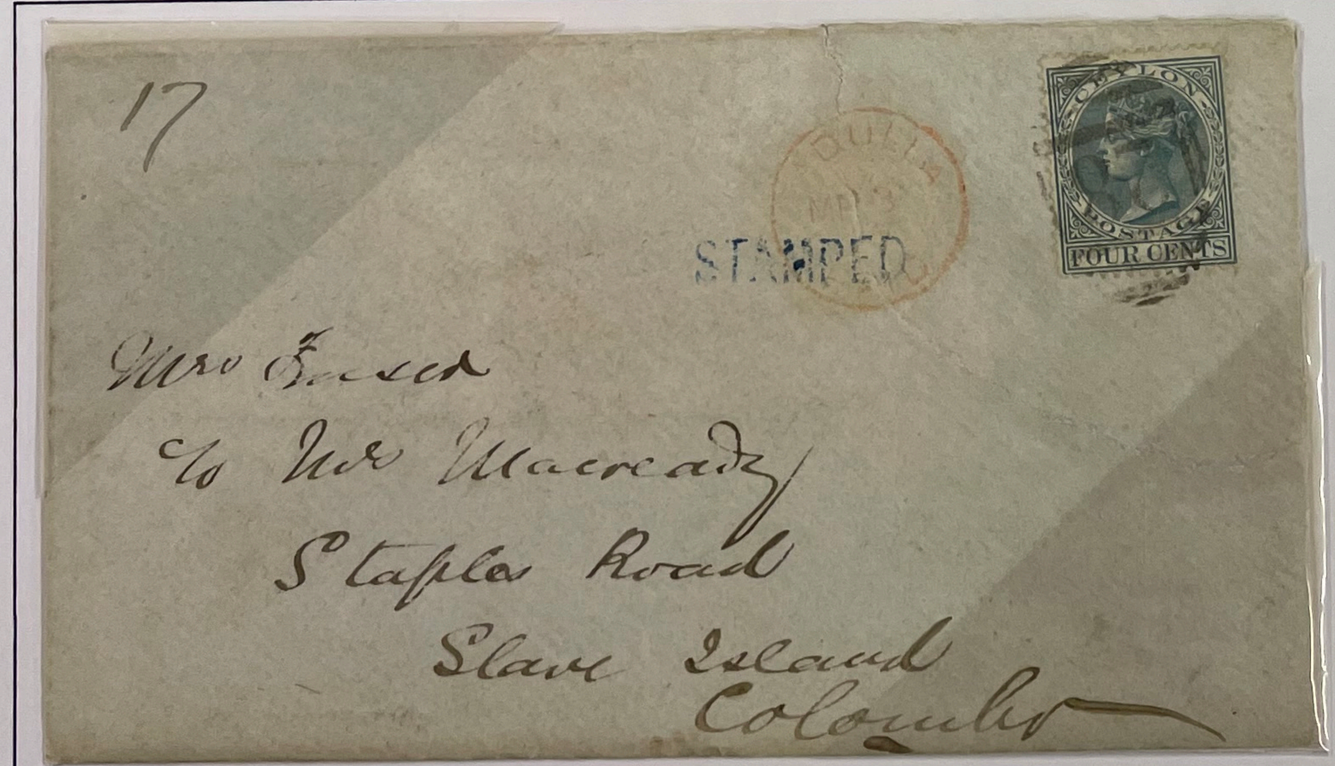
Wellewatte Canal, Colombo. Easy water access to Slave Island. On "Skeen- Photo" lithographed card.

Victorian Slave Island

Pre Slave Island Post

Clearing the Crocodiles: British Sport. Three part illustrations of crocodile shoot with slave child decoy 1888. Crocodiles stocked by the Portuguese & Dutch.





"STAMPED" hand stamped by sender **to discourage stamp removal** by carrier.

Slave Island,
Colombo →

Rate: 4 cent 1877 domestic cover with street address and "Slave Island Colombo." From Badulla inverted "28" obliterator, red March 3, 1877 cds. Reverse Colombo March 5, 1877. Follows an 1872 currency change, four cents to one pence.

B. Victorian Slave Island

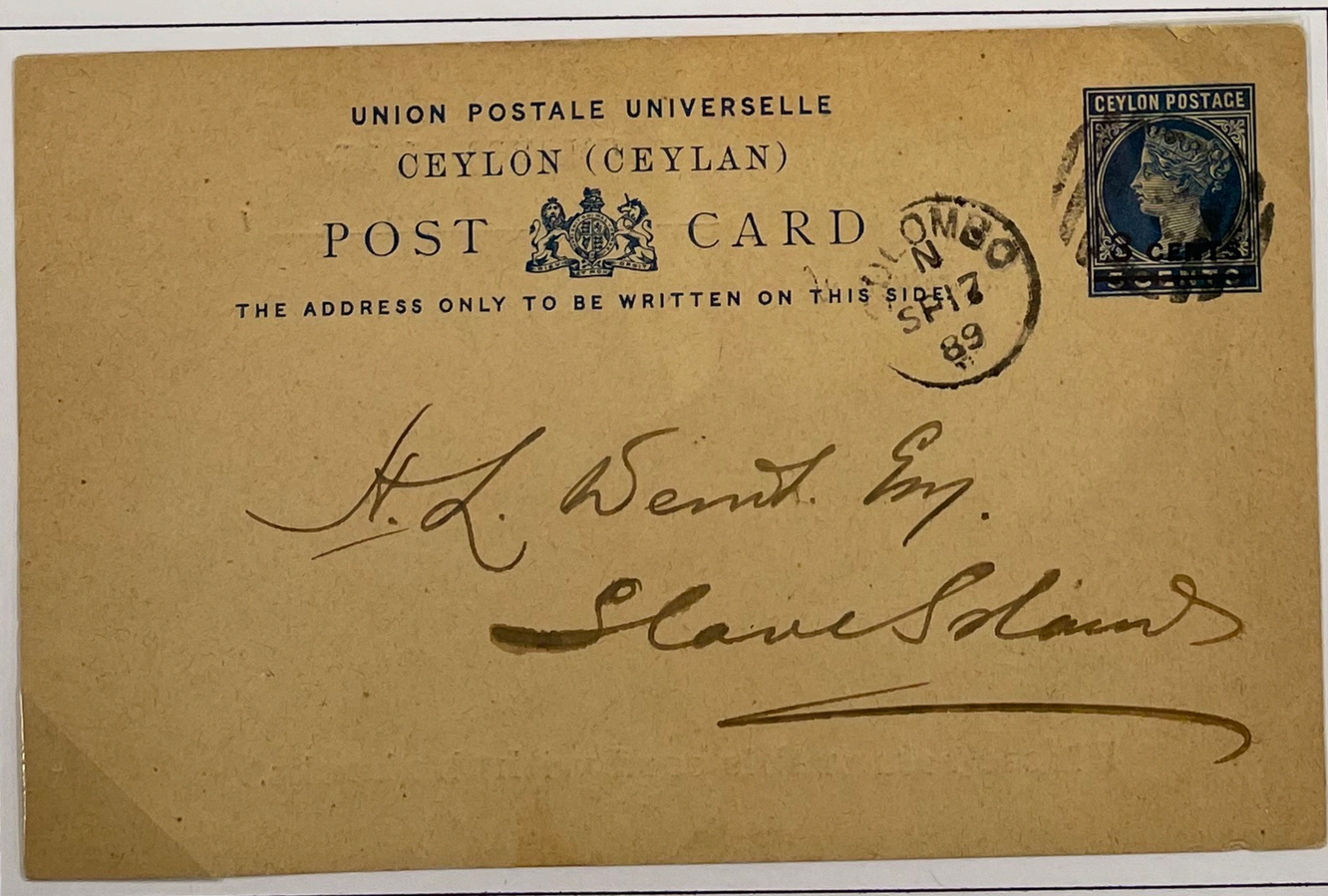
Sport in Ceylon at Slave Island



1. The Saurian's Foot Prints : "By Buddha, he must be a Twenty-footer" 2. Haggling for the Hire of Bait Warranted to Attract 3. The Man-Eater's Quietus

SPORT IN CEYLON—SHOOTING A MAN-EATING CROCODILE

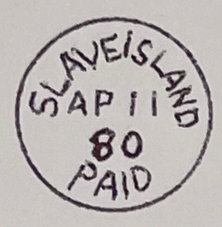
Clearing the crocodiles at the waters surrounding Slave Island: from Sport in Ceylon, London *The Graphic*, 1888.



Revalued "3 Cents"
Colombo to Slave Island
September 17, 1889.

Note: This post card suggests the small size of Slave Island, each has ***no street level address.***

B. Victorian Slave Island Slave Island Post Office Opens



Type I:
April 11, 1880
to September 2, 1891
20 mm

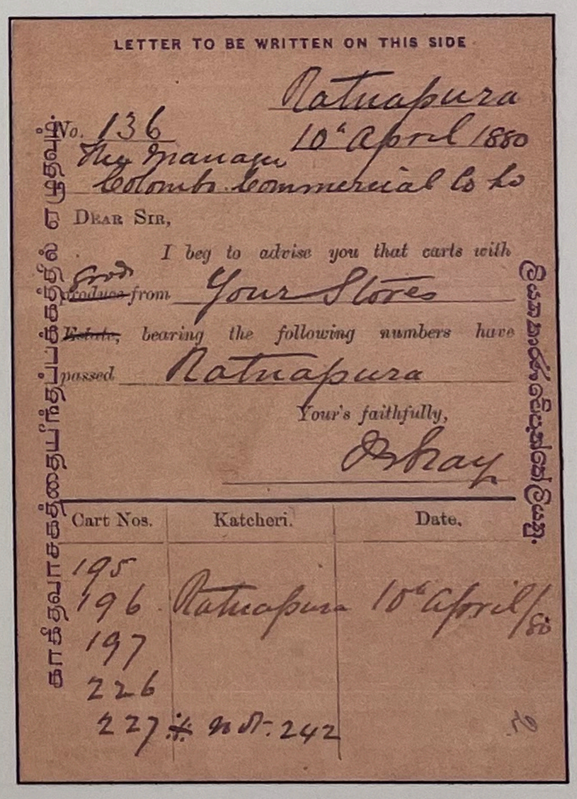
Earliest Recorded Use on card →
April 11, 1880



In 1880, Slave Island full service post office opened. "SLAVEISLAND" as one word distinguish this first postmark.



Slave Island full service post office processing Colombo Commercial mail.
The business community driving mail volume.



Reverse

2 cent to Slave Island, with Ratnapura sending, Colombo transit, and receiving SlaveIsland cancels.

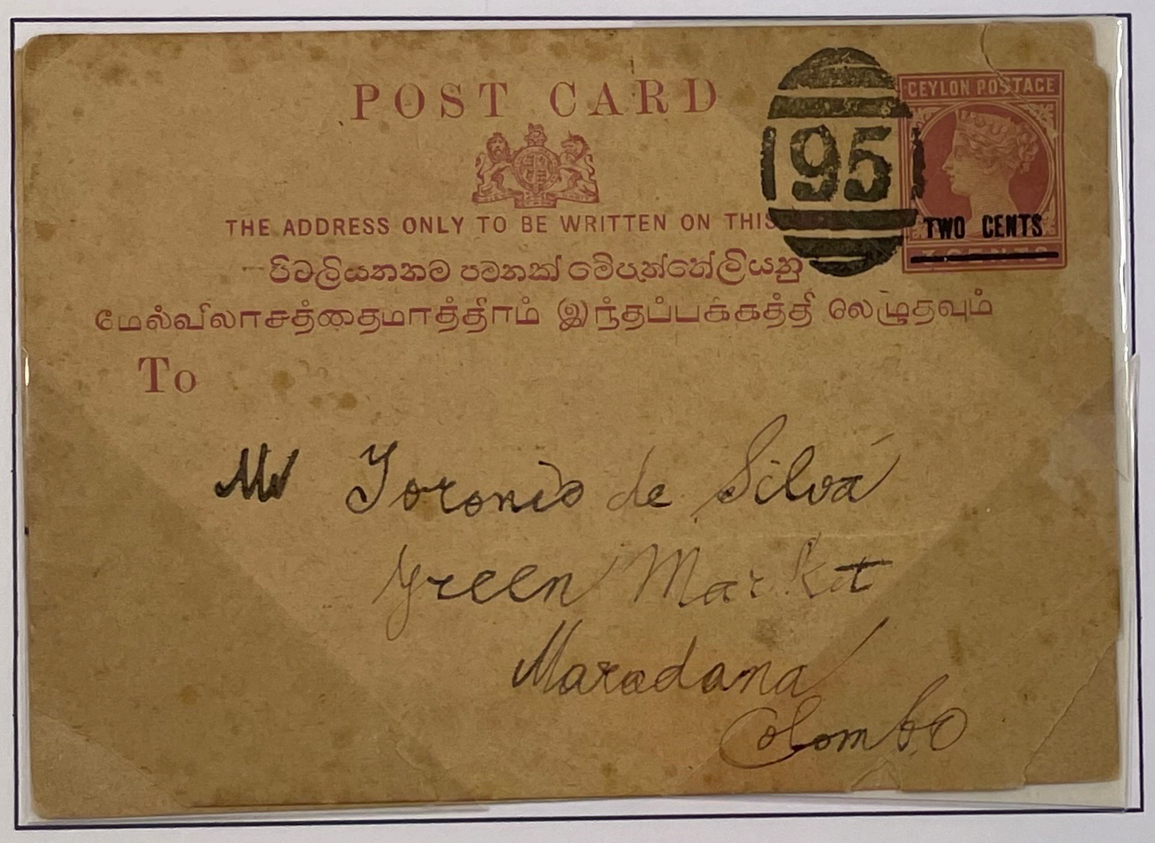
B. Victorian Slave Island

Local Mail

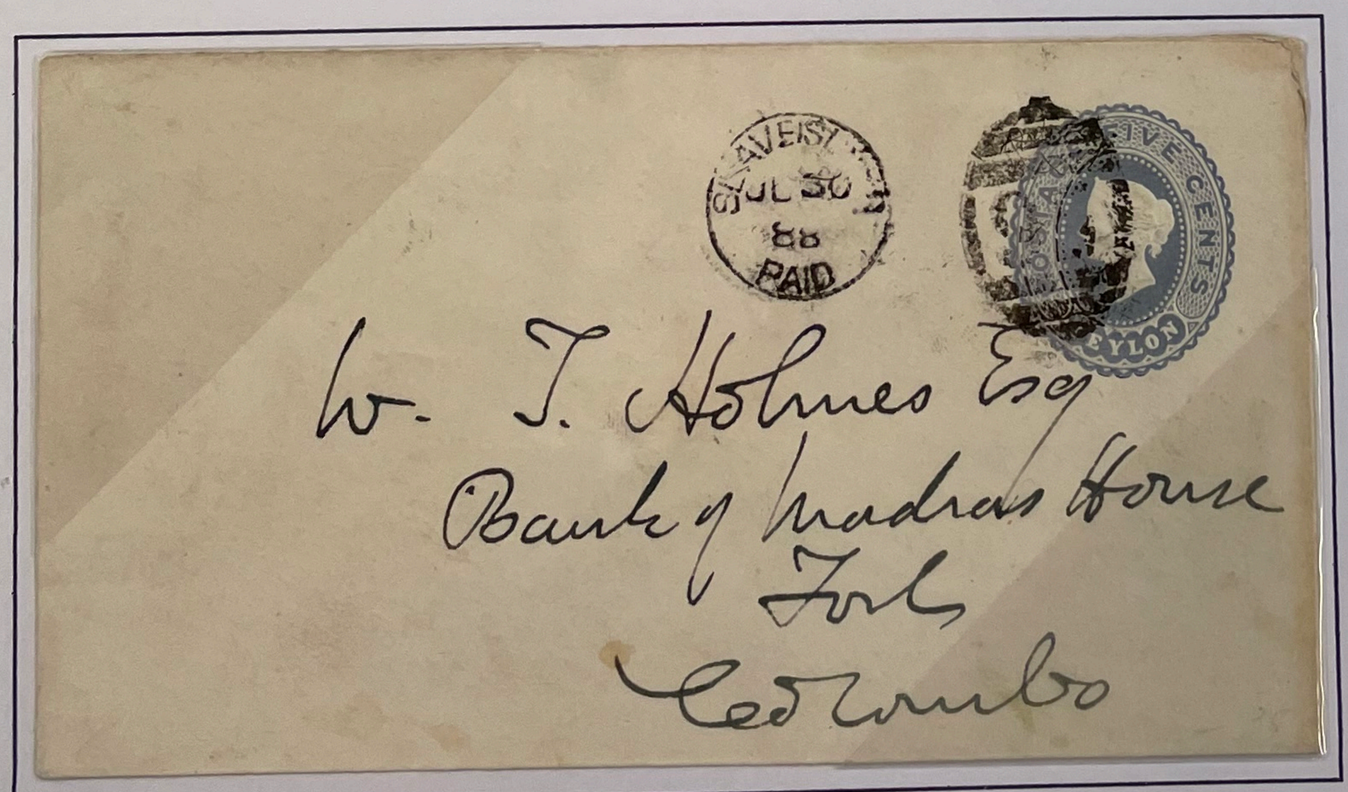
During the 1880s the Slave Island mail stream was led by the local business community. Early local mail generally received same day service, and businesses benefited from this convenient and inexpensive means of communication.



The "95" bar obliterator "killer" was used from 1884 until 1893 to cancel. The "95" was used **in addition** to the "SLAVEISLAND" paid datestamp, as an accountability indicator.



Revalued "TWO CENTS" on 3 cent stationery card. Slave Island bar "95" obliterator strike September 17, 1889.



5 cent domestic envelope sent locally to Fort, Colombo with separately applied "95" killer cancel on the indicia and datestamp July 30, 1888. Received same day.

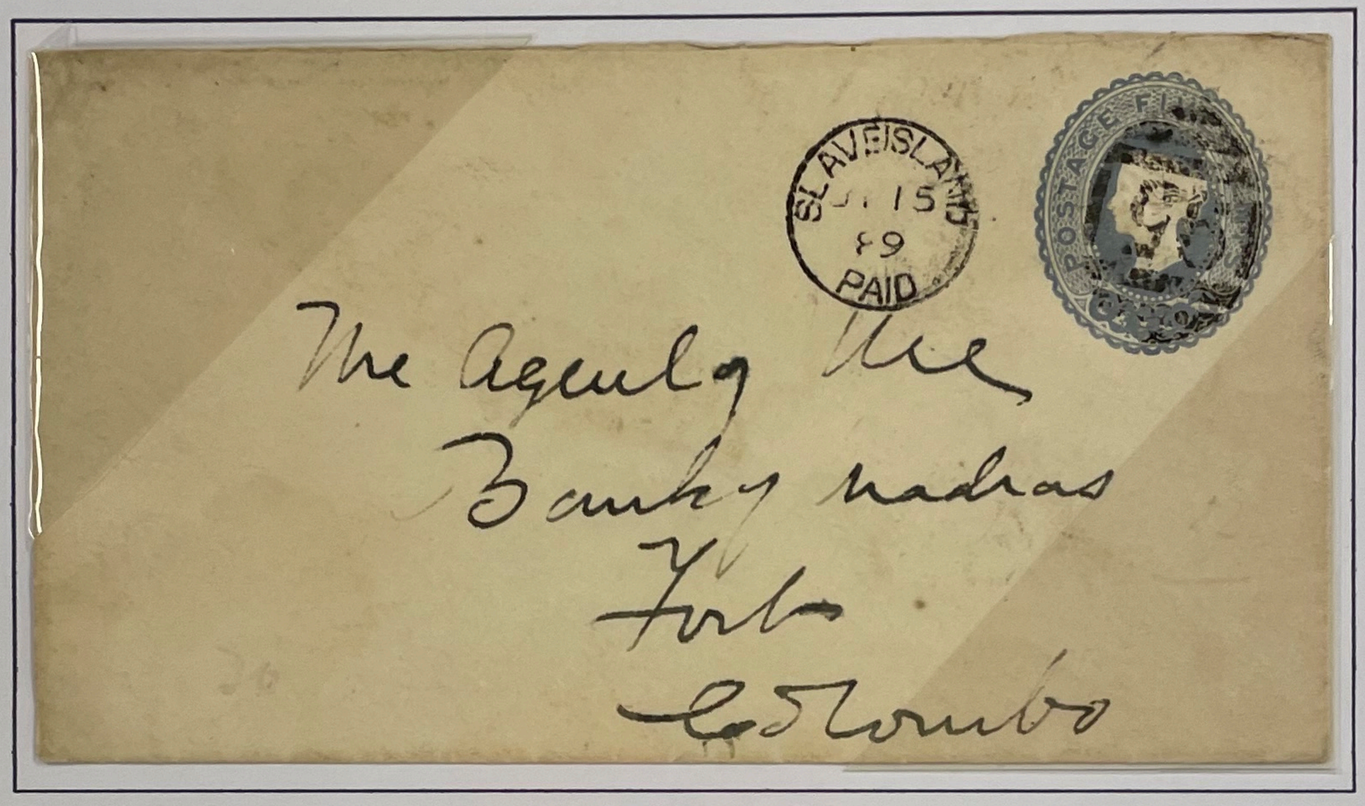
B. Victorian Slave Island

Local Mail, Cancel Study

The "95" bar obliterator "killer" cancel appear haphazardly applied, while the separately struck "SLAVEISLAND" circular paid stamp is neatly applied and oriented correctly.

The Reason: The "SLAVEISLAND" was an accountability strike, carrying the location and date stamp, the "95" killer was just obliterating the postage paid.

Inverted "95" Obliterator



5 cent domestic envelope sent locally to the Bank of Madras July 15, 1889.
Received same day.

Sideways "95" Obliterator



"The Price is Three Cents including the Card" overprinted 2 ½ cent domestic revalued postcard sent locally to Colombo, August 20, 1885.
Received same day.

B. Victorian Slave Island

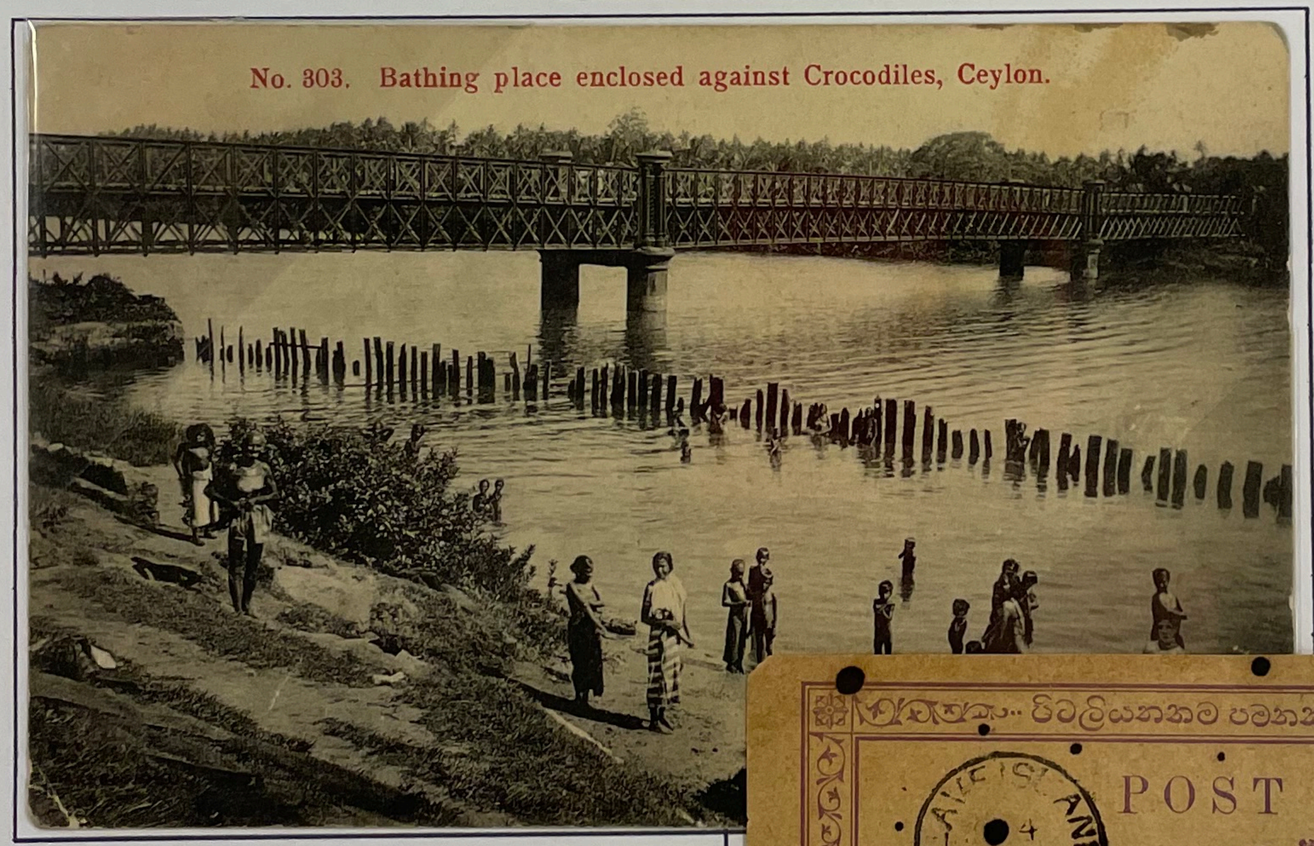
Inward Local Mail

Slave Island post office processed Inward mail from local (within Colombo) residents and businesses, generally providing same day service.



Slave Island to Slave Island

Inverted 5 cent overprint →
Revalue of 4 cent indicia.
May 27, 1888 to local
Slave Island resident.



← Keeping the Crocodiles Away
Bathing place at **Slave Island.**

Crocodiles remain years beyond the Slaving Days.

Plâtè lithograph UPU post card printed in Germany.



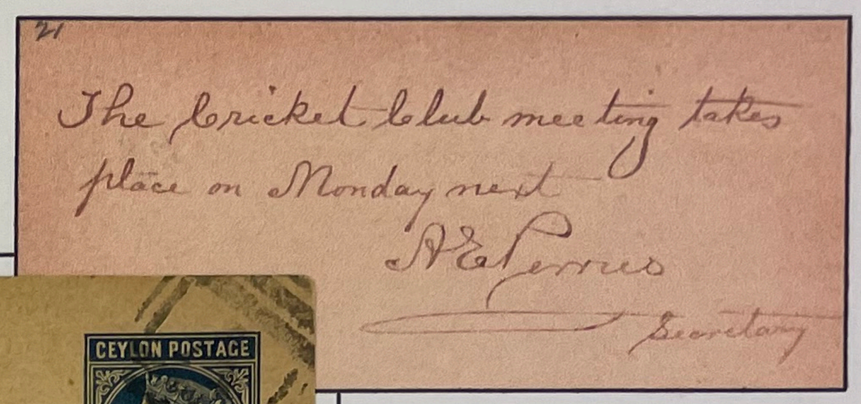
2 ½ cent revalued 2 cent postcard.
May 4, 1885 Colombo Large bar A killer cancel with Slave Island receiving cds.
Large bar obliterators only used in Colombo.

Colombo Commercial Company Ltd established in the 1876, remained in business over 100 years.

B. Victorian Slave Island

Local Colombo Processing

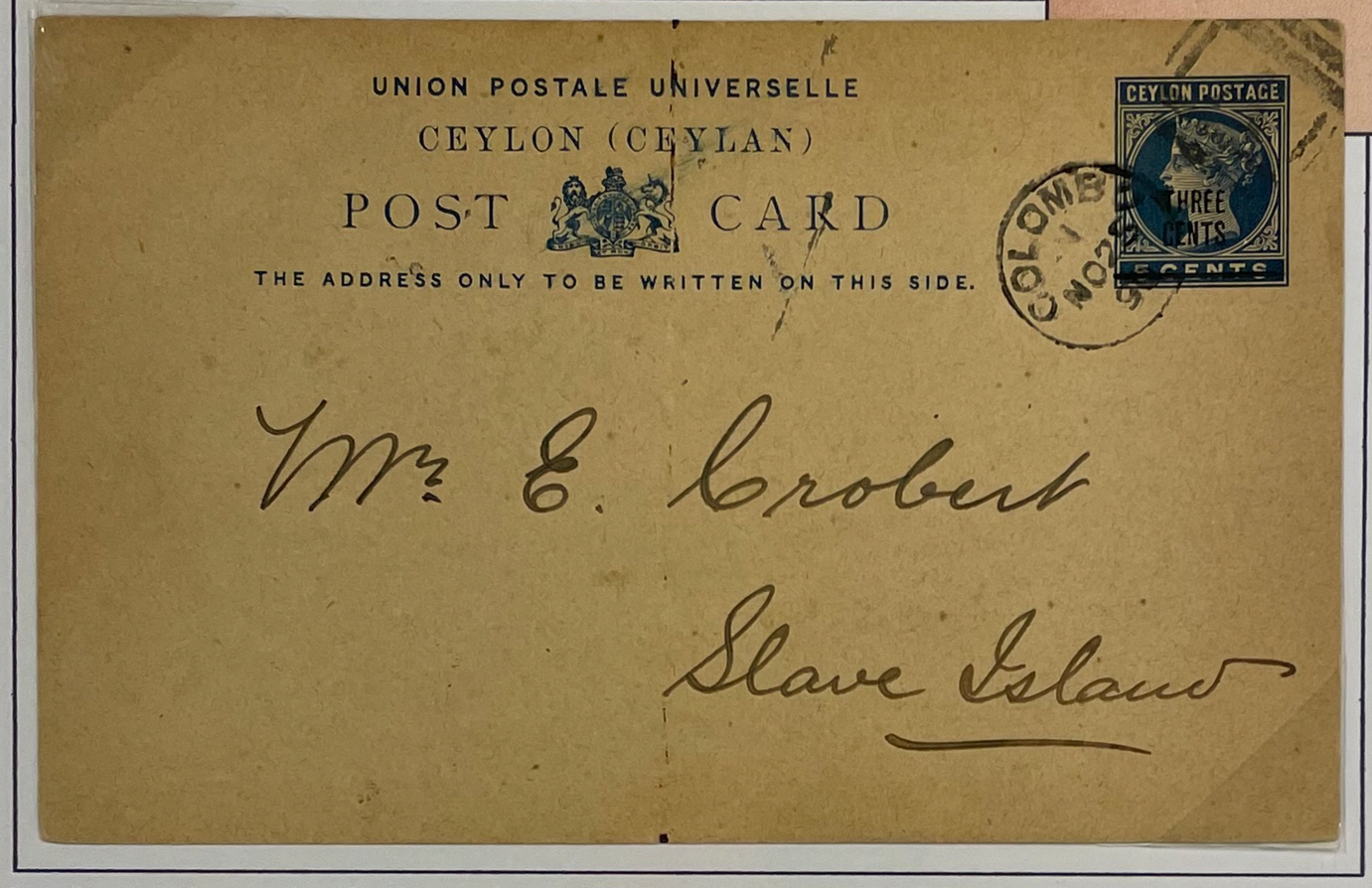
Slave Island mail **without** Slave Island post office processing or receiving markings. This mail was processed and delivered from Colombo GPO without going through the Slave Island post office.


21

The Cricket Club meeting takes place on Monday next

P. Talpenis

Secretary



Colombo to Slave Island, November 25, 1890. Revalued "THREE CENTS" on 5 Cent.

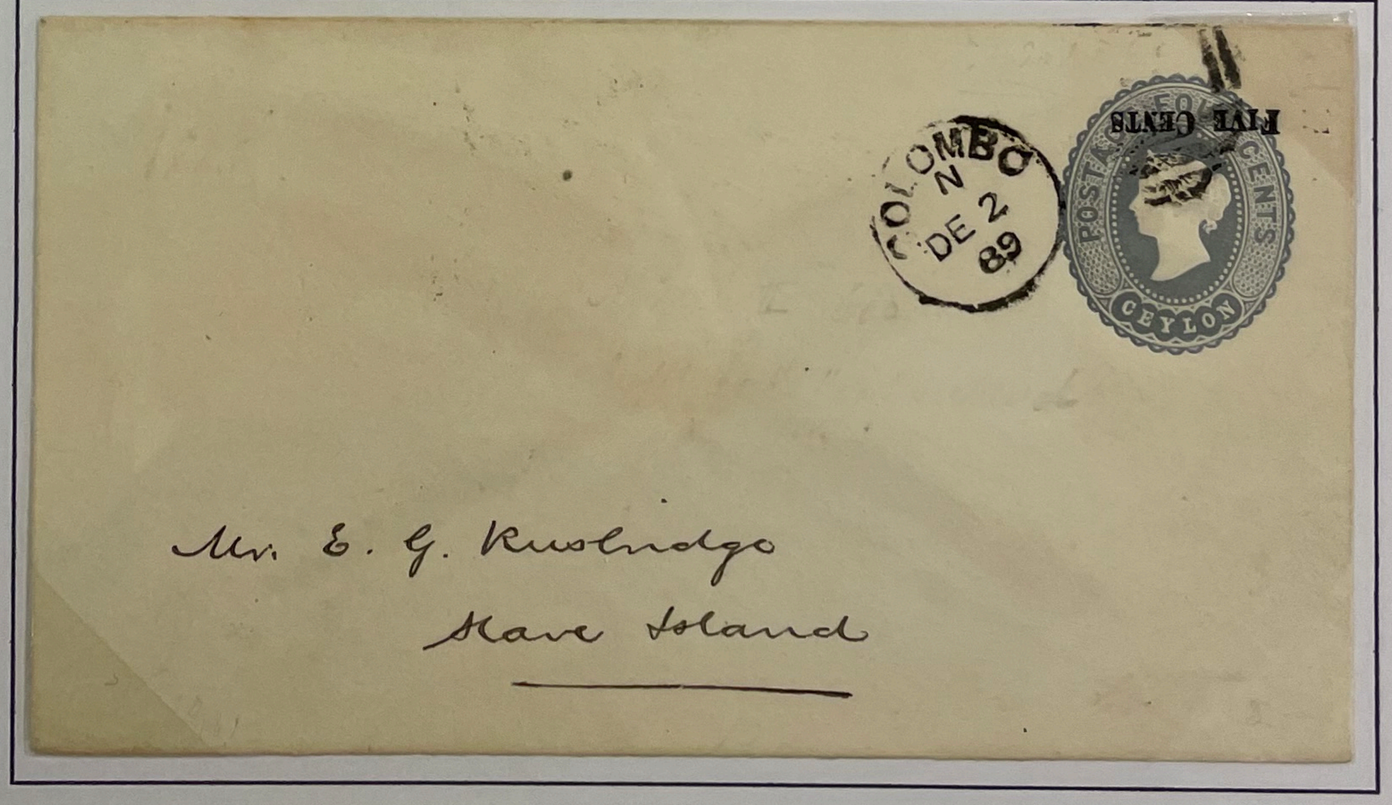
Slave Island's location and waterfront access worked well for in-city sporting use. Notice of Cricket Club meeting.

Reverse Partial at 75%

Inverted Surcharge

"FIVE CENTS" on four cents for revaluation.

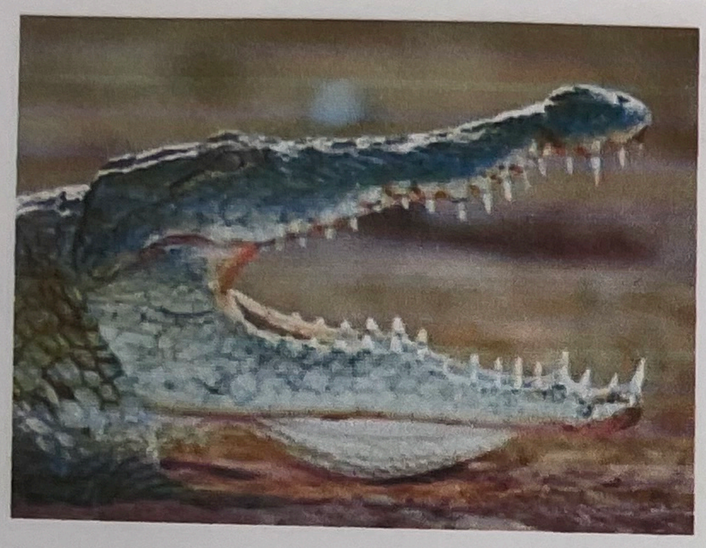
Colombo to Slave Island December 2, 1889.



Mr. E. G. Rusbridge

Slave Island

With Slave Island population at less than 2,000 in the 1880s, this mail was sent without street addressing.



SLAVE ISLAND CEYLON SYNOPSIS

FOR ATA SHOW 2017



Title and Treatment
The purpose of this exhibit is to use the postmarks and display elements to advance the social history story of Slave Island, Ceylon. This was a town whose post office functioned under what we would now deem a pejorative name for over 114 years.

Knowledge, Study & Research
The exhibit provides an introduction of the history of Slave Island, at a time before the British controlled the island and established the Slave Island post office. From a postal perspective, Slave Island functioned as a sub-post office to the General Post Office in the capital of Ceylon, Colombo. Aspects of the history of the area, the growth of Colombo & Slave Island are described by the mail and added to with appropriate display elements. The research presented here details the social history changes on Slave Island, as well as the postal history of the island.

The exhibit provides the first available census of mail types from Slave Island, and describes how and why the mail stream changed. This only became possible by assembling the two largest collections of this material, and taking the opportunity to analyze the findings. Census was more broadly formed from covers in this exhibit and back stock collection, and others material held by other collectors known.

Earlier inquiries to the Slave Island postmaster and the Chief of Sri Lanka's National Archives, as suggested by the Sri Lankan Embassy's Deputy Chief of Missions, brought little in the way of added historic context. The larger historic information included is from personal study of the social history written about the island.

Presentation
This exhibit is arranged chronologically, using of monarchal reigns to establish a common frame of reference for time. Each cancellation is presented on mail organized by how it was used, to be reflective of both the social and postal history of the eras described.

The use of census of mail volume by type is provided to further categorize and delineate the mail use. Instead of strictly a marcophily exhibit, the exhibit is a social history exhibit of the town ordered by postmarks chronologically as applied on the differing mail types. To further explore the types of mail from Slave Island, the reverse of cards or covers are shown when of social interest. Post cards and other display items are included where they advance the story and add context to the exhibit. Coverage spans the years of the cancels use, mirroring the mail volume as it occurred.

Rarity and Condition
Acquiring Slave Island material is a problem of availability, the rarity of this exhibit really lies in the totality of the items that have been assembled. The condition of items shown is the best of what exists, the better items selected from my overall collection. Part of the difficulty in finding material is that covers from Ceylon are limited in general. It is the opinion of one of Sri Lanka's few philatelists that stamp dealers gained more profit selling Ceylon / Sri Lanka stamps as kiloware, destroying the covers we want. Fortunately, a good number of postal cards provide social history content information to give us the glimpses into the past.

While you might expect that the early mail is the great rarity, this is true only until the 1880s. More mail was actually cancelled "Slave Island" in the 1890s until the 1930s. A change of policy in 1940s required that mail dropped off at the Slave Island post office would be taken to the parent Colombo G.P.O. for Colombo postmarking. Only registered items and mail presented at the counter would continue to receive the Slave Island postmark after 1940, and that mail found is limited. Mail volume further drops off when tourism fell following years of localized terrorism and civil war. While not as pretty, this is some of the tricky material added to the exhibit. This exhibit presents mail in representative volumes found.

A red outline box is used for the items of greater rarity.

Importance
The importance of this exhibit is in its focus on a single post office and its contribution to understanding Ceylon philately in general. Ceylon is often collected as a part of the British Empire or Commonwealth, less often as a primary focus. This narrow look into the mail from one town over time provides a basis for comparative study, looking into the cancel use over time and mail processing decisions as they compare to other post offices across the British Empire.

The social interest importance is fact that slavery had been abolished by the British well before the establishment of the post office. This makes it clear that the name was derived from history, not from contemporary practice. The post office simply adopted the area's name of Slave Island, and kept that name until the 1994! This exhibit takes us through the century-plus of Slave Island, through interesting and changing times.

References:

The Postal History of Ceylon Ted Proud. Slave Island Pages 375-376
King George VI Postmarks David Horry. Slave Island Pages 155-156
"Slave Island???" D. G. Vorhis American Philatelist, October 2006, Pages 944-945
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colombo - Slave Island brief history included.



B. Victorian Slave Island

Inward Domestic Mail

Business was conducted through the mails. Here tracking of delivery time of this domestic mail shows next day service. **Inward** mail with "SlaveIsland Paid" datestamp used as a receiving mark.

COLOMBO
COMMERCIAL Coy., Ltd.

ESTATE SUPPLIES

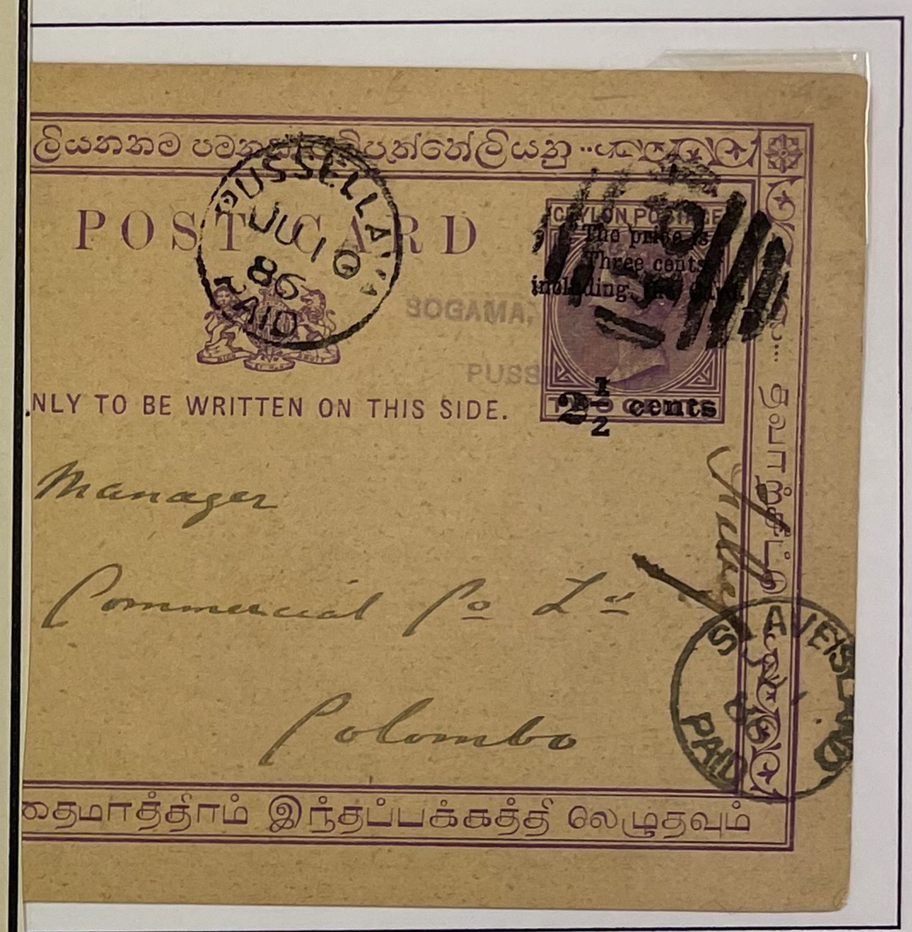
Packing Materials
and all other
Estate Requisites

"Reeled" Tea Lead

Agents for:—

Eastern Rolling Mills, Ltd.

Ceylon Head Office & Mills: Slave Island, Colombo.

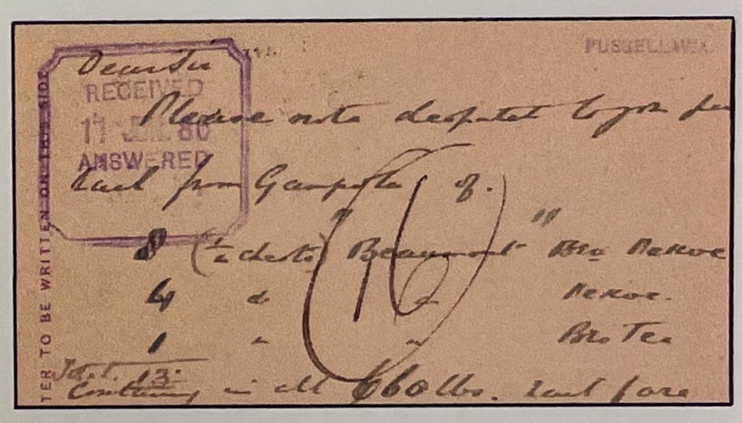


↑ Colombo Commercial
Located on Slave Island

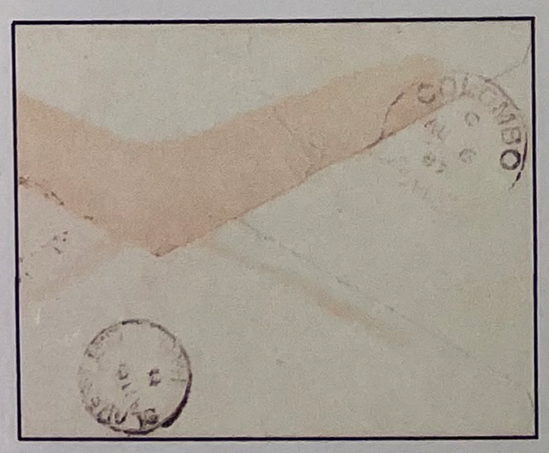
Providing packing materials for the tea industry.

2 ½ cent revalued postcard. July 11, 1886 Inward next day to Slave Island. ***Colombo Commercial Co. Order for Packing Supplies: Tea Chests***, scan of reverse.

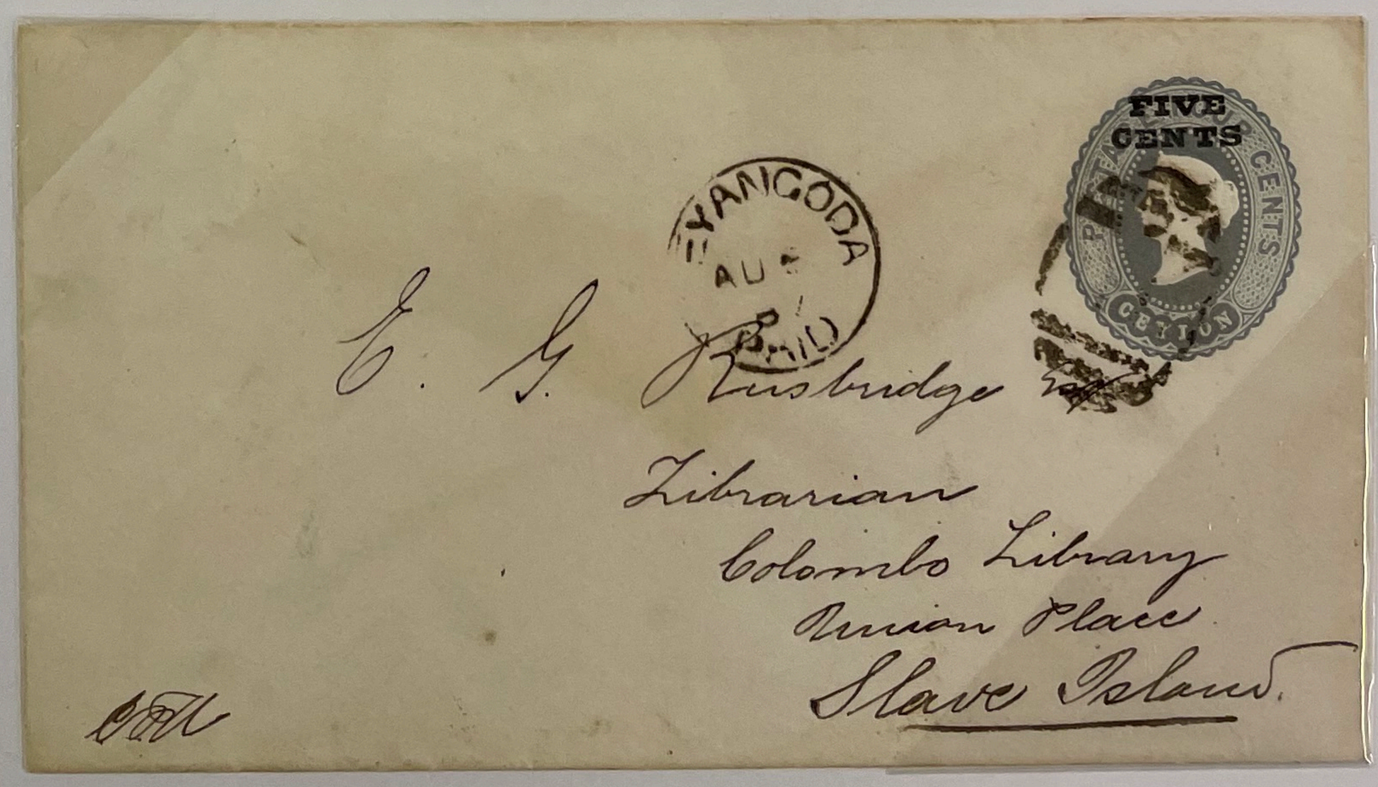
By the mid-1880s after a loss of the coffee crops, tea replaced coffee as the lead plantation crop.



A rate change
September 1, 1885:
- Post cards 2 ½ cents
- Letters 5 cents



Type I "SlaveIsland Paid" on reverse, next day delivery.



5 cent revalued domestic envelope from Veyangoda with "99" killer August 6, 1887.
Colombo Library located on Slave Island.

B. Victorian Slave Island

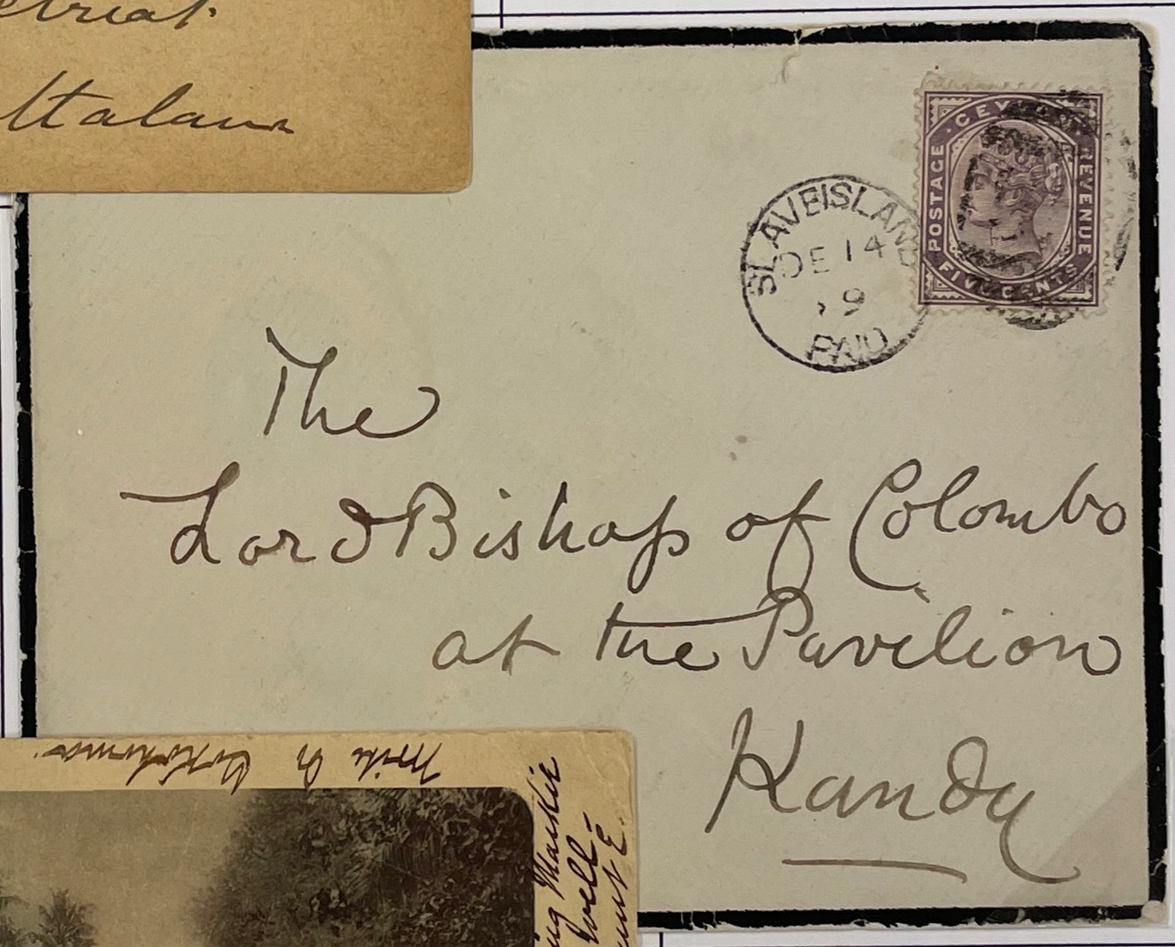
Domestic Mail

"SLAVEISLAND" datestamp provided tracking for domestic mail. The island of Ceylon is approximately the size of the state of Indiana. By the 1890s, rail lines carried delivering within one to two days island wide.



3 cent domestic postcard. July 2, 1891 with two day delivery to distant Puttlam.

Notice of dispatch of a customer order for patterns.



5 cent domestic mourning cover received next day in Kandy, December 15, 1889 →

Kandy is the historic capital from Sinhalese early native rule.



← Typical of roadways used by mail coach for mail delivery in Ceylon.

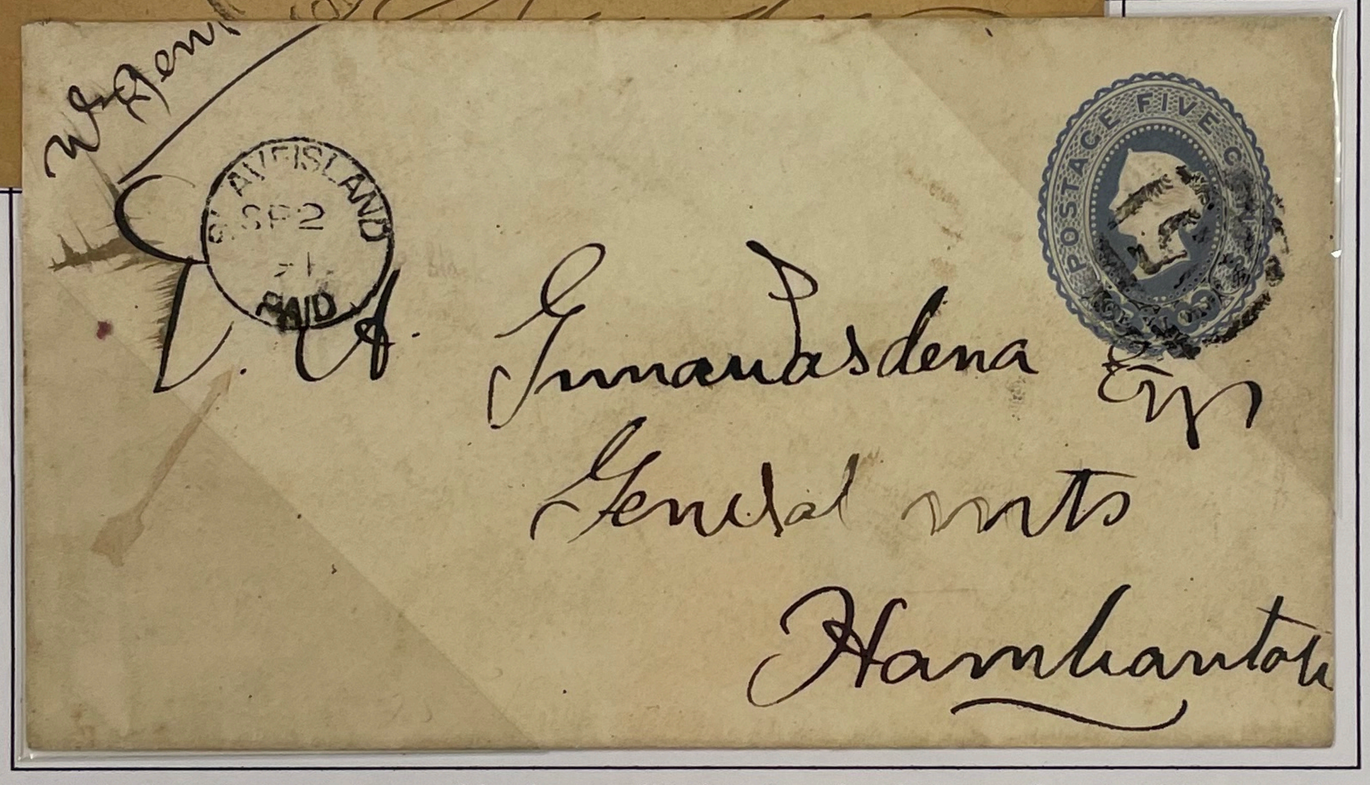
W.A. Plâtè lithograph card UPU undivided back.

B. Victorian Slave Island

Domestic Mail



3 cent domestic with Type I cancel and faint "95" March 10, 1887. Received next day.

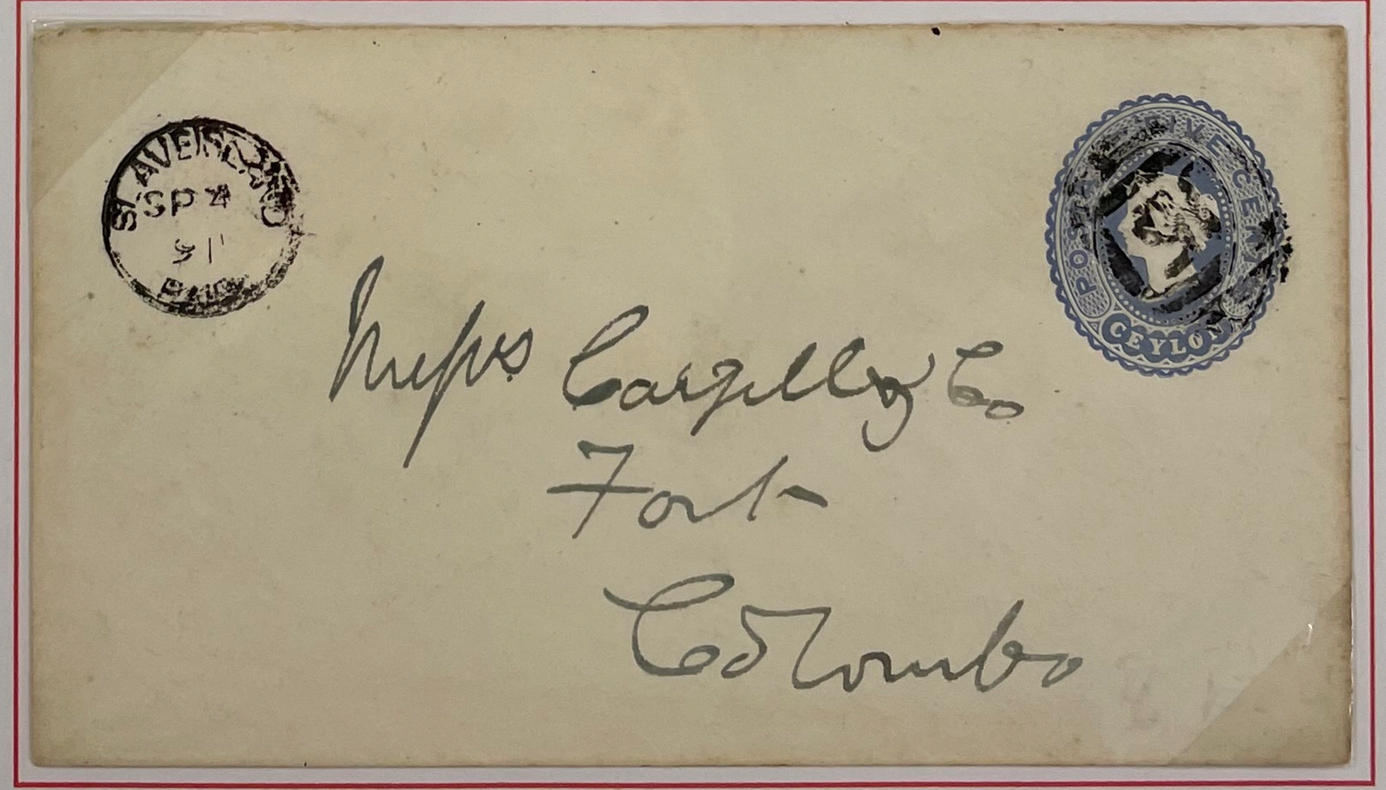


5 cent domestic with Type I cancel, September 2, 1891.

Sent to Hambantota, located in the tea district. Received September 4, 1891, two days.

Latest Recorded Use→
September 4, 1891

Extends latest published recording



5 cent domestic envelope sent locally to nearby **Fort, Colombo** with separately applied "95" killer cancel and datestamp September 4, 1891, received same day.

B. Victorian Slave Island

Foreign Mail

During the 1880s the Slave Island area grew with local business activity serving the capital of Colombo's local needs. This **Slave Island mail census** of the cancels on early mail identifies the changing mail stream patterns from this post office over time. Local mail, serving the Colombo area, is distinguished from domestic mail as the service level for local is same day. Domestic mail received next day to two day service.

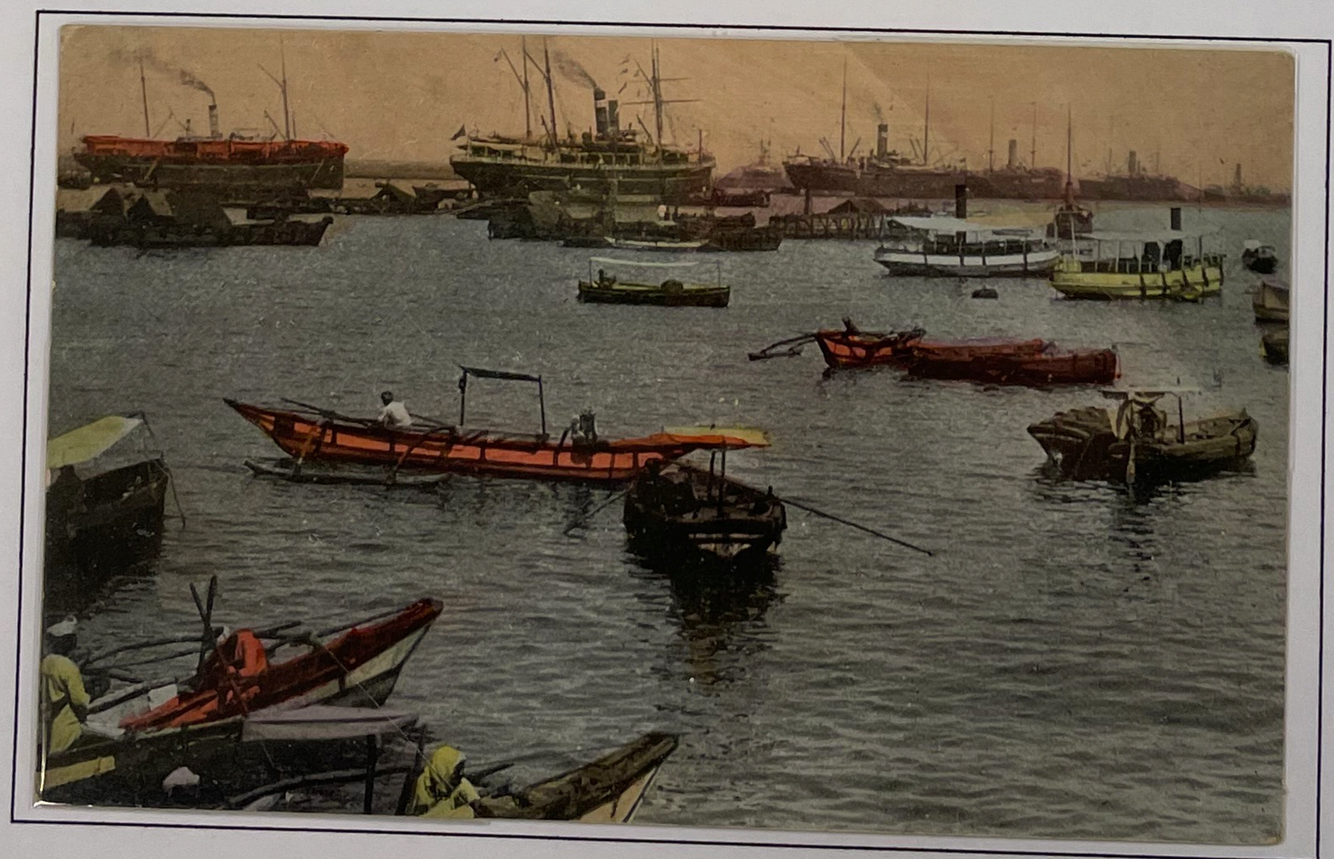
Mail Census Type I Cancels



Early Slave Island mail is mostly local mail.



10c foreign to **Egypt**, redirected, November 14, 1887. Slave Island to Cairo in 14 days.



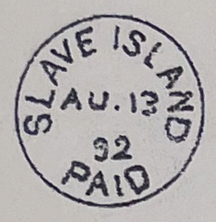


"95" obliterator on over-printed 1 Rs 12c high value used on foreign mailings.

Colorized post card view Colombo harbor, view from Slave Island.

B. Victorian Slave Island — Local Commercial Mail

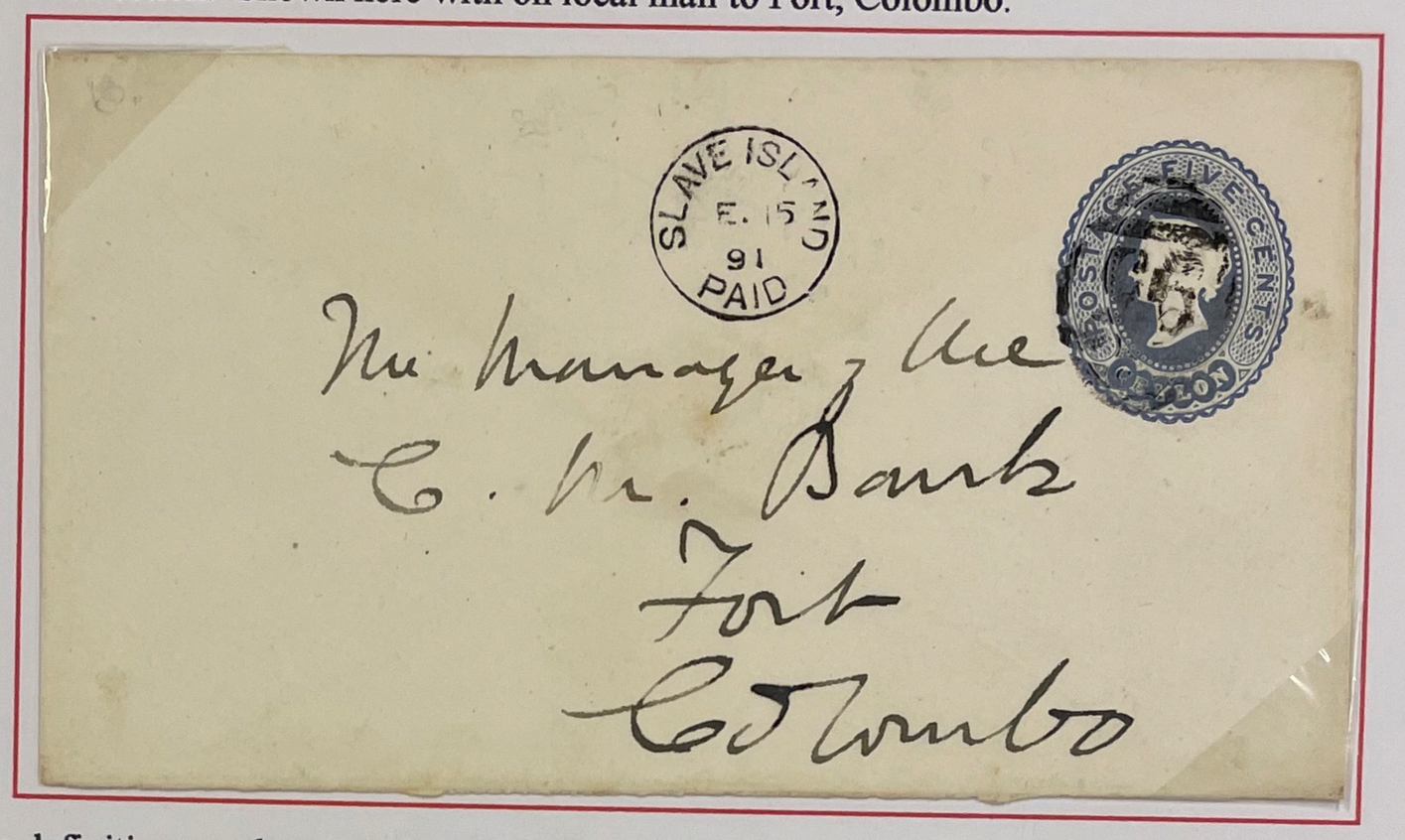
The name Slave Island had historic meaning, but *had become just a name for this in-city neighborhood.* Finally, in 1891, a long-standing "typo" was corrected and a new cancel put into use. The Type II postmark has a **separation of SLAVE and ISLAND into two words**. Curiously the Type I postmark was used with **SLAVEISLAND** as one word for 11 years without correction. Shown here with on local mail to Fort, Colombo.



Type II:
September 15, 1891
to June 9, 1893
20 mm

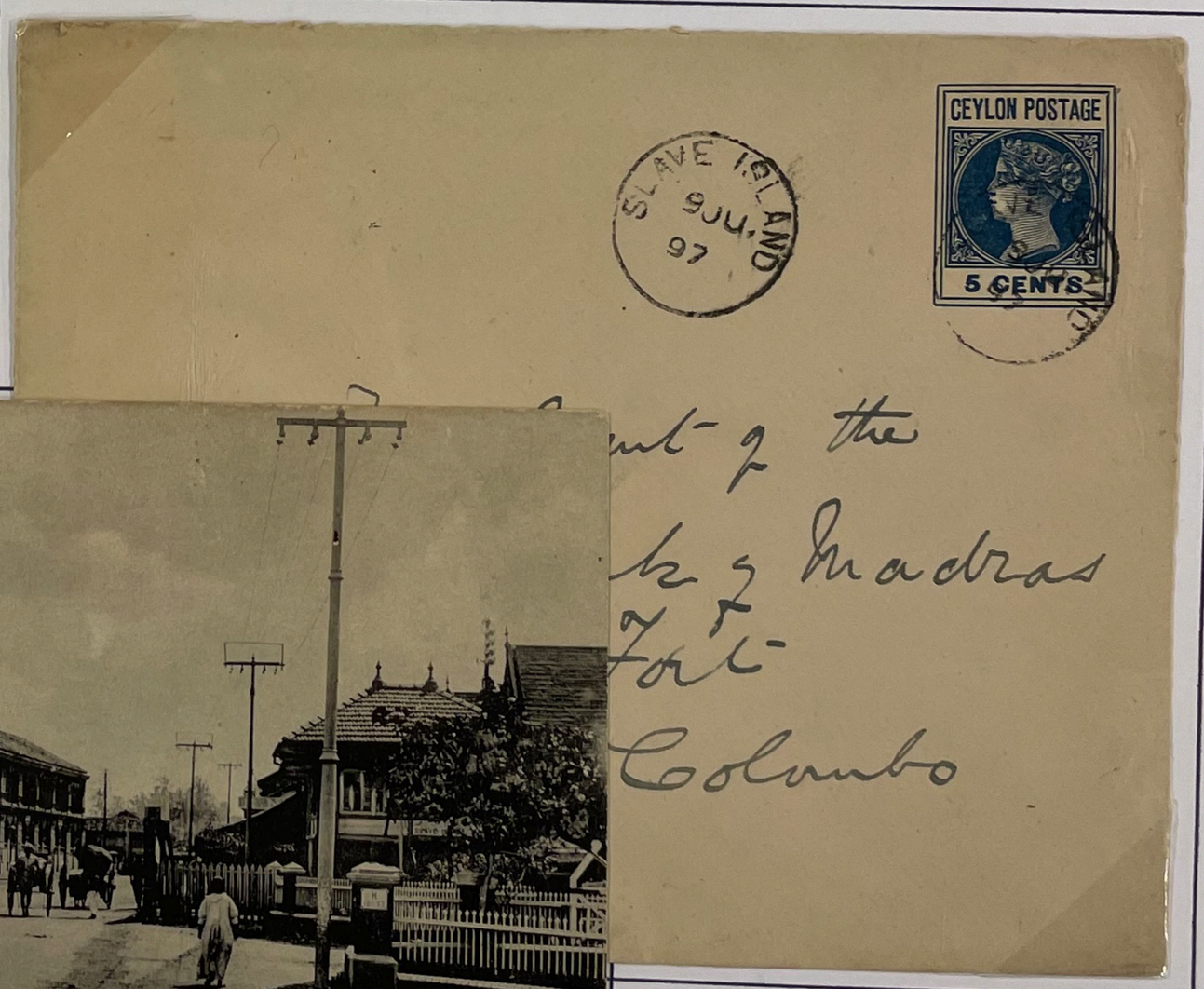
Newly Discovered Earliest Use →
September 15, 1891

Predates earlier published recording.



5c definitive envelope sent locally to **Fort, Colombo** with an inverted "95" killer cancel and datestamp September 15, 1891, received same day. Colombo receiving SP 15 91 on reverse.

5 cent 1895 issued domestic → envelope with Type III as cancel. Sent June 9, 1897 to the Bank of Madras in the **Fort, Colombo**.





← **Slave Island** Ceylon Tuck "Collo-Photo" lithograph card UPU split back.

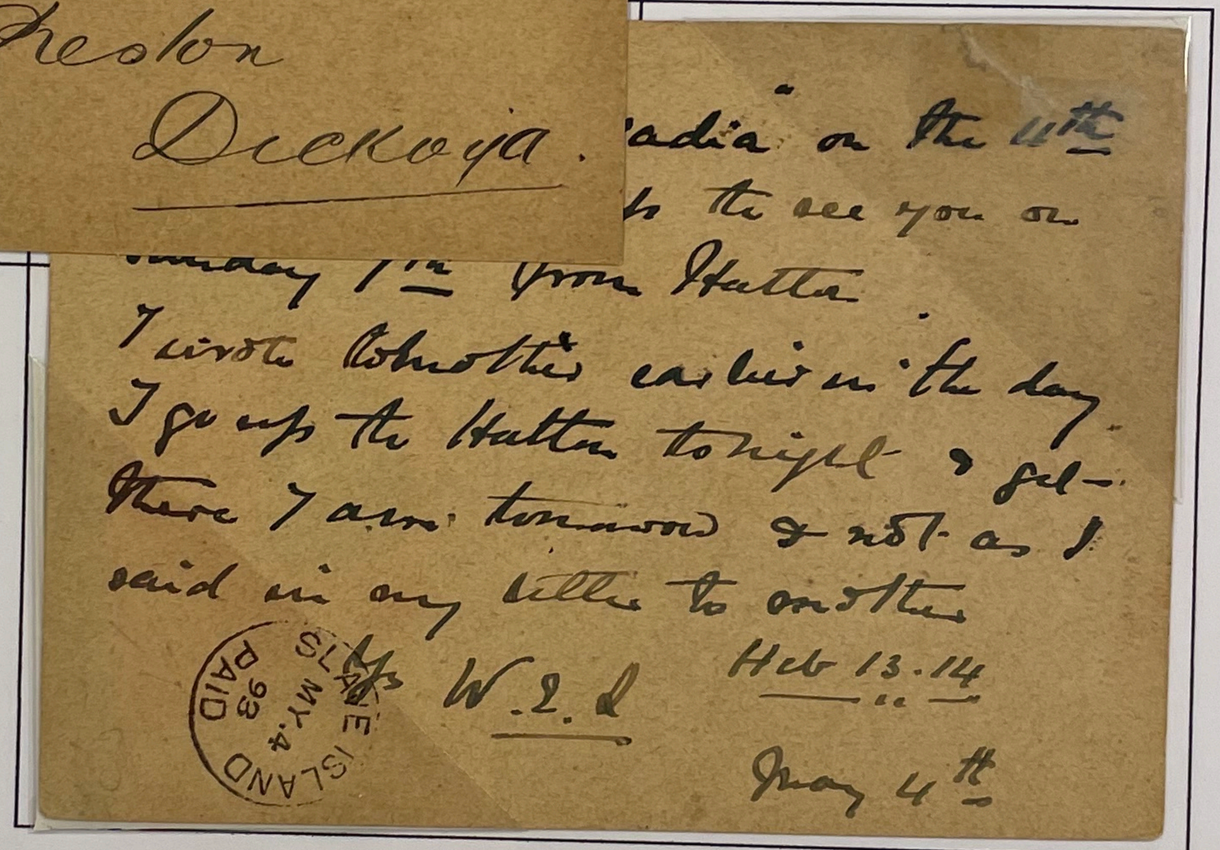
B. Victorian Slave Island Domestic Mail Phasing Out "95'

The killer **numeral obliterators (95) were phased out** in the mid 1890s island wide. This reduced the labor of a two strike to cancel and datestamp mail.

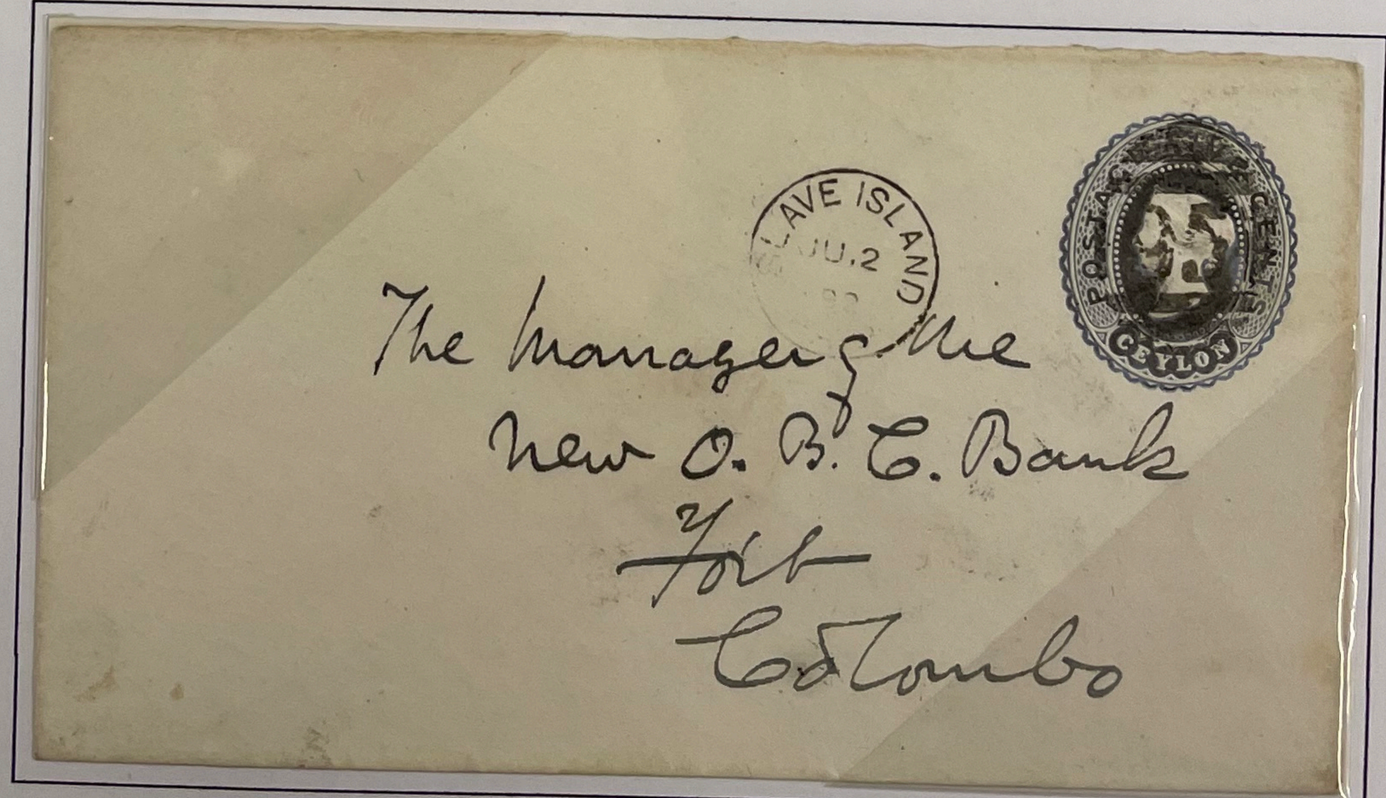


← Revalued "TWO CENTS" card, May 3, 1893 cancel and transits without a "95" strike.

Slave Island cancels → front and reverse without the "95" strike May 4, 1893.



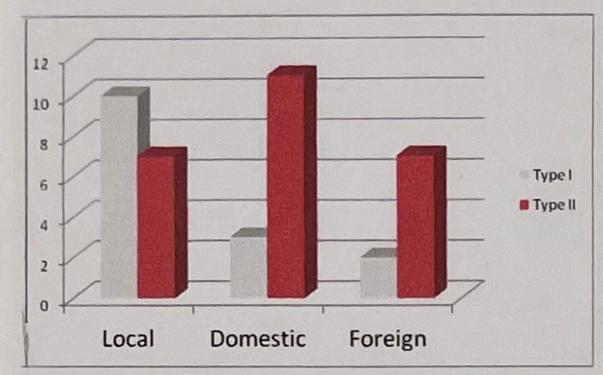
Five cent envelope with → **"95" obliterator**. June 2, 1892, **one year earlier**.



B. Victorian Slave Island

Ending Type II Cancel

The local and increasingly island wide mail stream during the use of the Type II cancels indicates Slave Island's reach beyond Colombo proper. Domestic mail is here 35% of the mail.



5 cent front definitive envelope →
Type II cancel May 10, 1893.





← Slave Island Type II cancels and transits May 26, 1893 on two cent revalued card.

In 1886 correspondence between Ceylon and India served by British India Steamer rated as domestic.



3 cent domestic postcard →
with Type II cancel August 13, 1892. **Domestic rate extended to India**. Five day delivery.

B. Victorian Slave Island

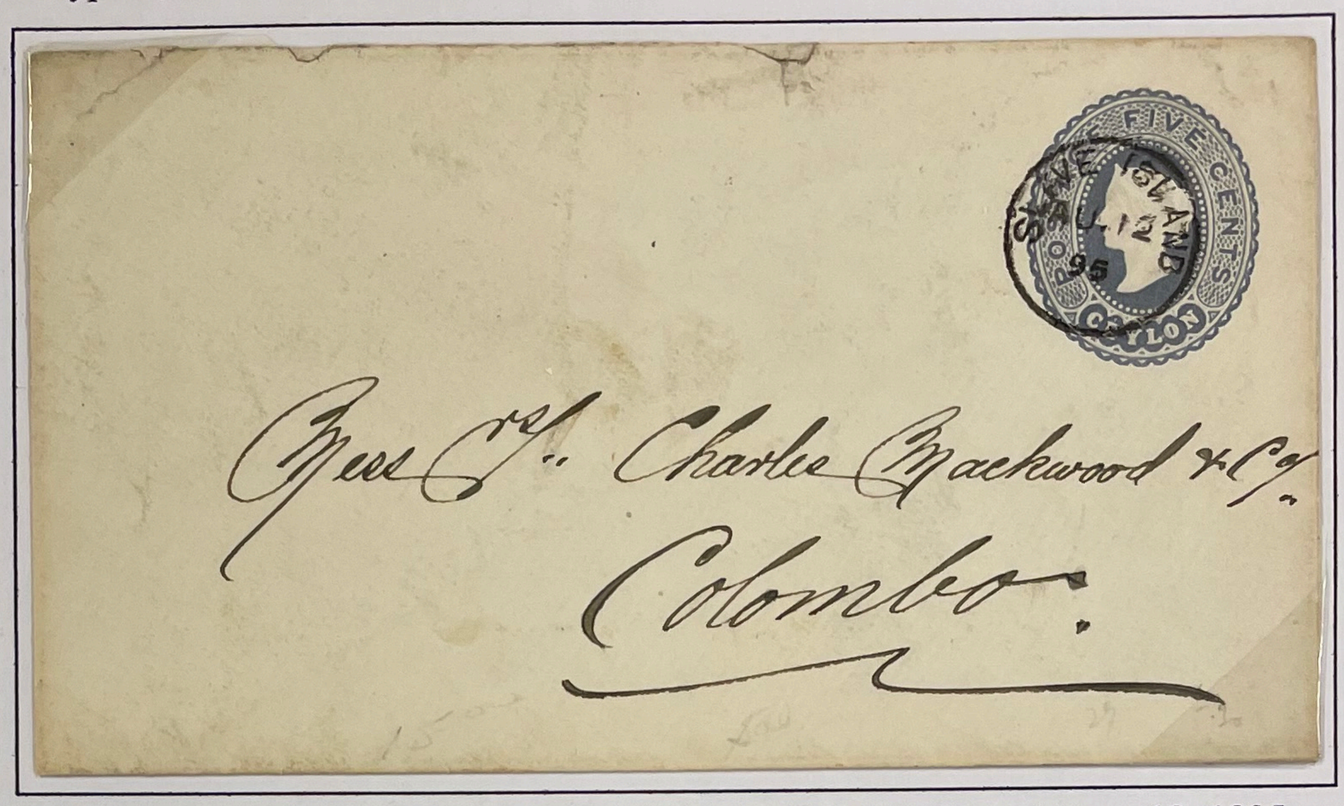
Local Business Mail

Type III Cancel

The Type III cancel differs from Type II, the "Paid" has been removed.



Type III:
May 11, 1893
to April 13, 1903
20 mm



Five cent domestic envelope of 1887 cancelled with Type III on August 12, 1895.

To Charles Mackwood & Co. one of the largest plantation owners & financers on the island.



"General Post Office, Colombo" where Slave Island mail went to for dispatch to other local offices and beyond.

Shown on colorized "Sadoon" postcard. Lithograph and locally printed.



Two cent card sent September 18, 1895 with Type III cancel to Cinnamon Gardens.

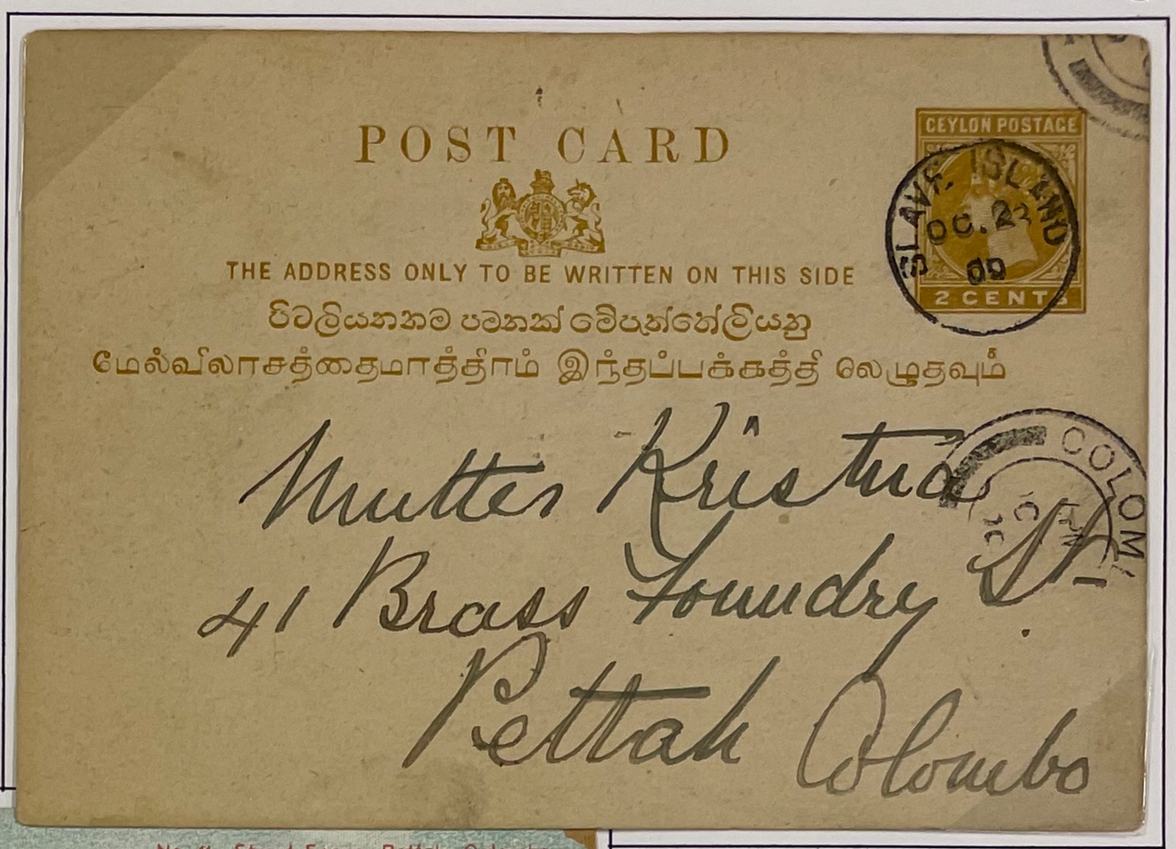
Cinnamon Gardens is a nearby area in Colombo, home to gardens and the offices of the Lipton Tea company.

B. Victorian Slave Island

Local Colombo Processing

Cards featuring Slave Island Type III cancels **with Colombo GPO double ring** cancel as transit marking.

Cancels show **how the mail processed:** Mail for Colombo area post offices processed through the GPO hub rather than office to office direct.



2c postcard Slave Island Type III → October 28, 1900 cancel and

*Addressed to **Pettah, Colombo**, which is the local market.*



← Pettah, Colombo Street Scene

Colombo Apothecaries from colorized photo, UPU split back.

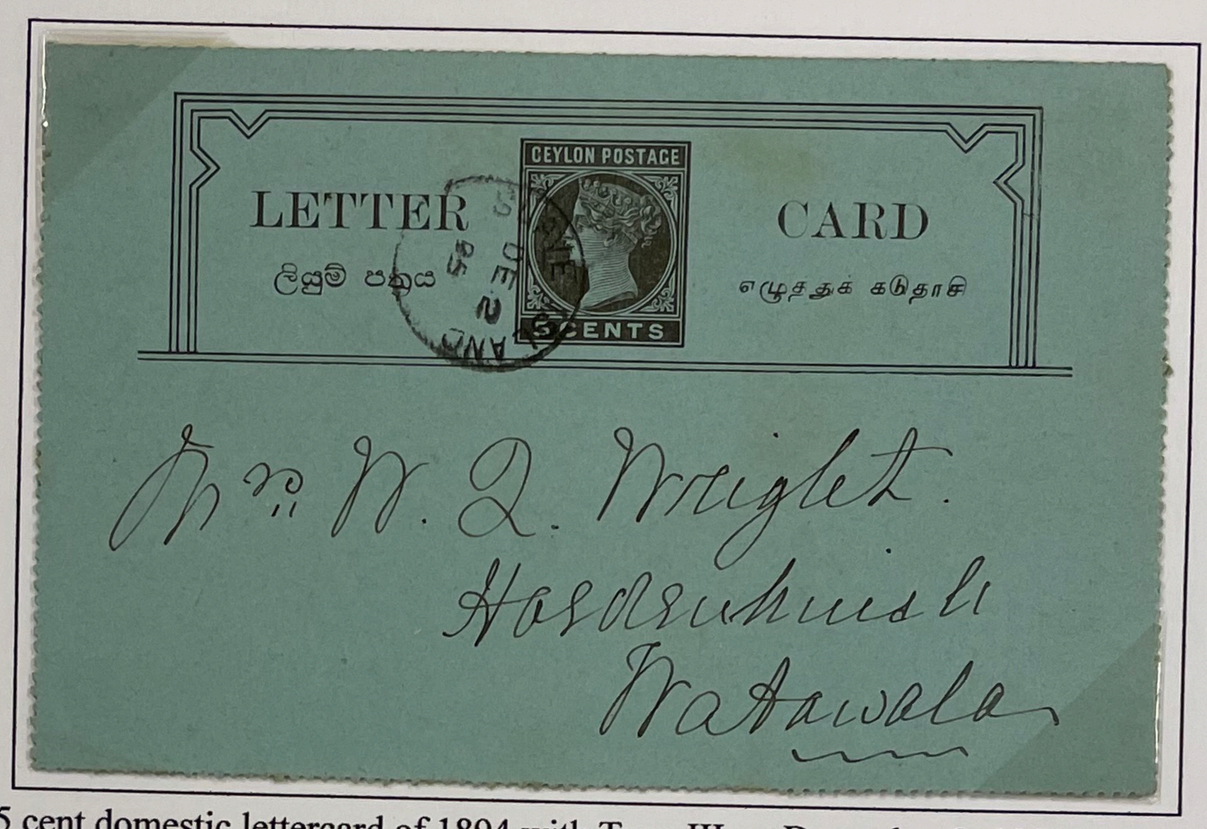


"2 cent" January 23, 1902

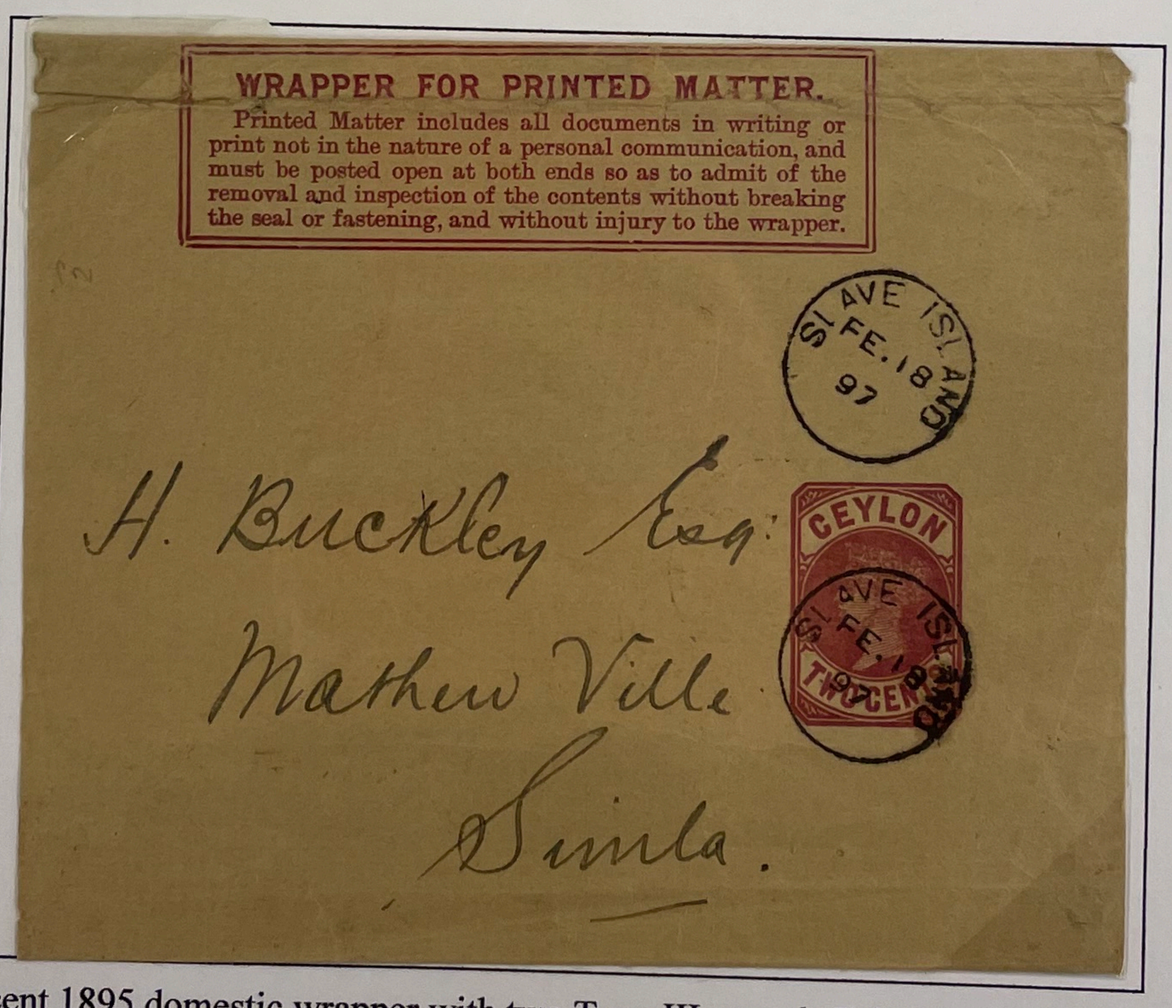
Marked "Local" in upper left, addressed to "The Tent"

B. Victorian Slave Island

Domestic Mail



5 cent domestic lettercard of 1894 with Type III on December 2, 1895. Receiving mark on reverse in Matawala next day.



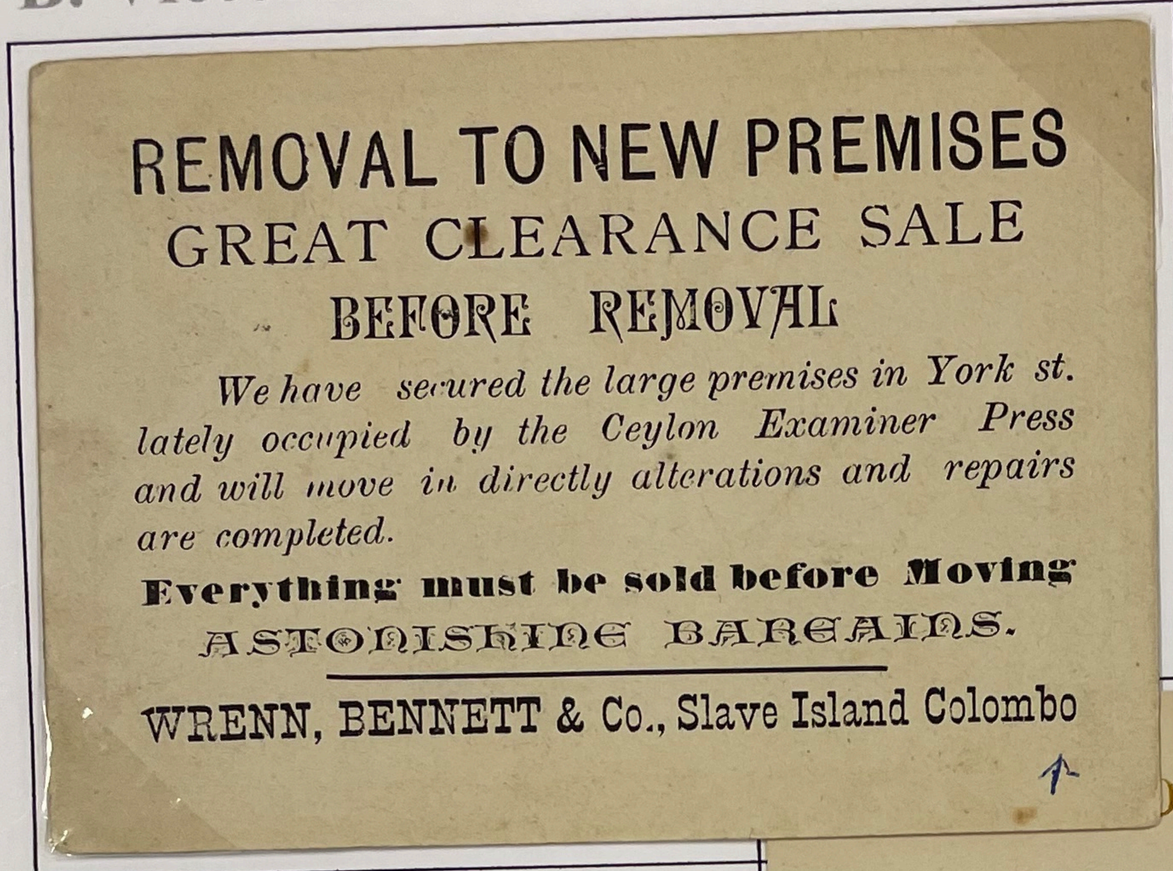
2 cent 1895 domestic wrapper with two Type III cancels February 18, 1897.

B. Victorian Slave Island

Domestic Retailer Mail

← Retailer Business Growth

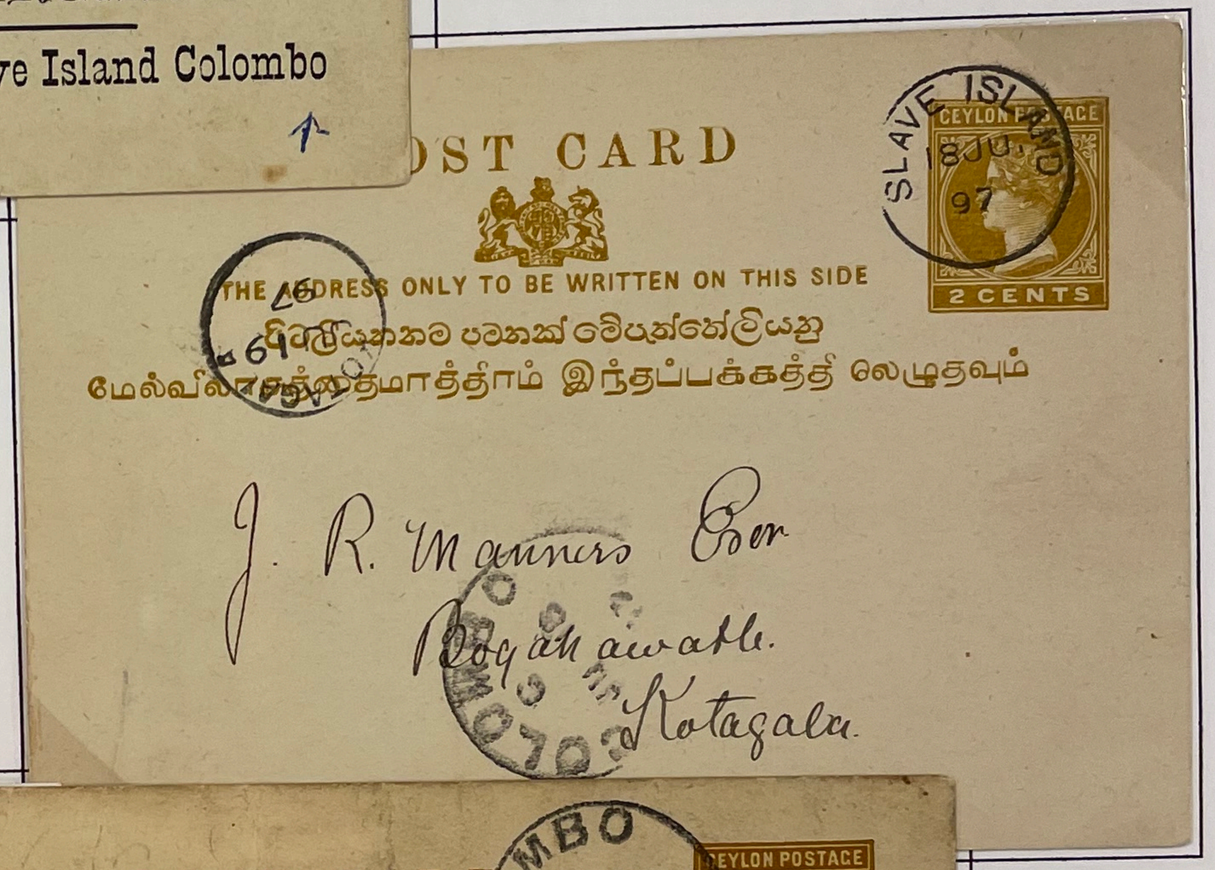
Reverse Slave Island Type III
on two cent postcard.


REMOVAL TO NEW PREMISES
GREAT CLEARANCE SALE
BEFORE REMOVAL
We have secured the large premises in York st. lately occupied by the Ceylon Examiner Press and will move in directly alterations and repairs are completed.
Everything must be sold before Moving
ASTONISHING BARGAINS.
WRENN, BENNETT & Co., Slave Island Colombo

2 cent June 18, 1897
Colombo Ice Company →
Stationery in standard color:
yellow olive.

Slave Island business of dairy, grocery, ice delivery.

Reverse: Fish delivery.



2 cent postmark as cancel
and transit July 15, 1896.

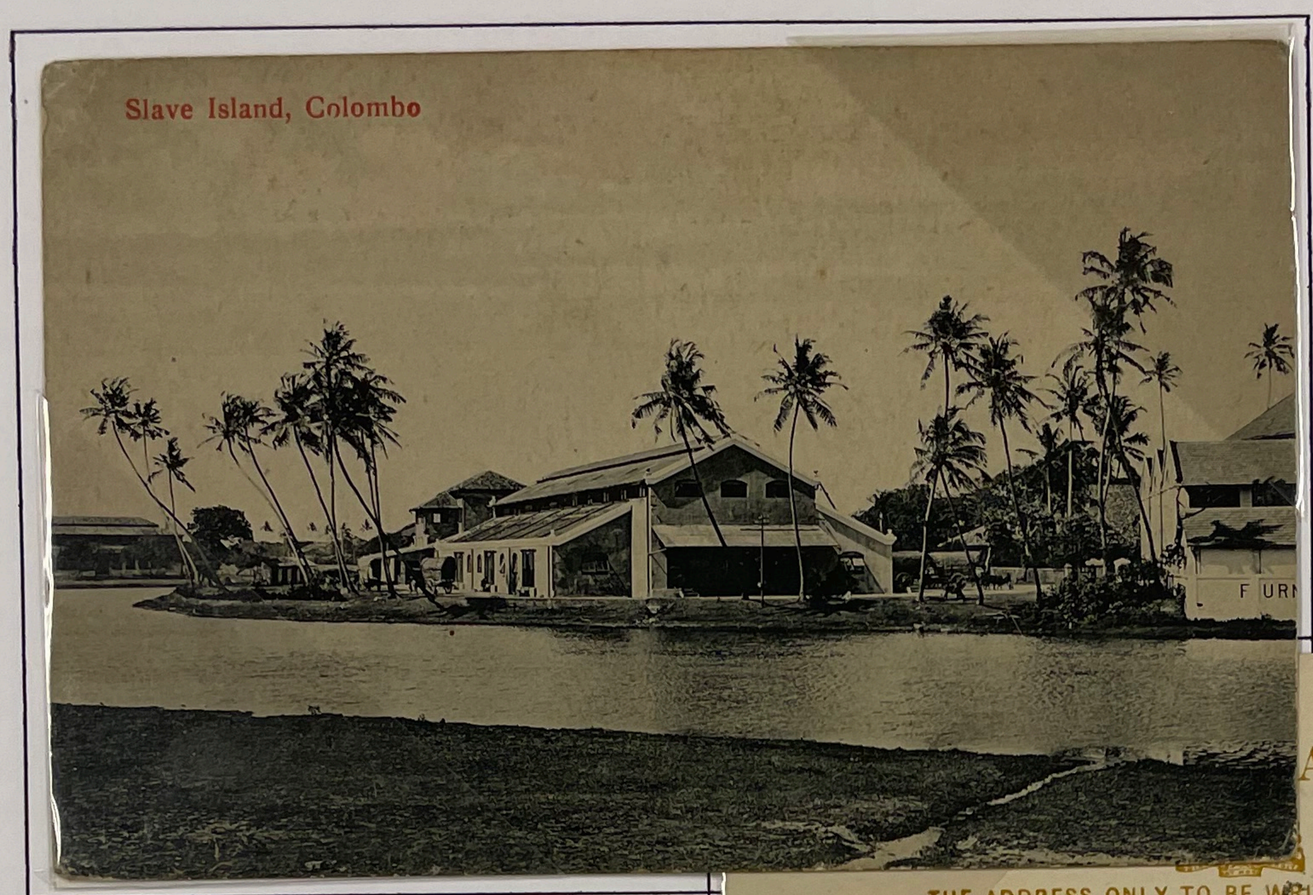
Large format Colombo C
timestamp transit. cancel.

Stationery color variety:
brown olive.



Retail business correspondence at the turn of the century on Slave Island. The two cent postcard rate allowed provided local same day service and was the key business communication tool.

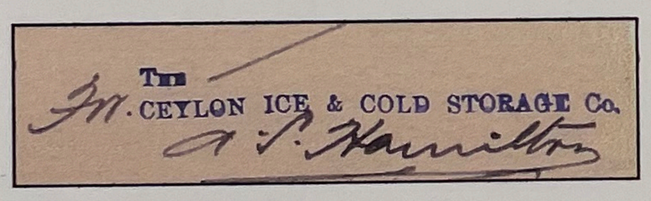
B. Victorian Slave Island Domestic Commercial Mail



← **Traveller's Mart, Slave Island** on German Uduman's split back postcard. Printed in Saxony.



2 cent July 22, 1898 → card to Kurengala. Ceylon Ice & Cold Storage, Slave Island.



Reverse



2 cent October 8, 1897 → To Kandy, **Redirected** Ceylon Ice & Cold Storage Meat delivery, sent on **night mail train**.

B. Victorian Slave Island

Official & Civic Mail

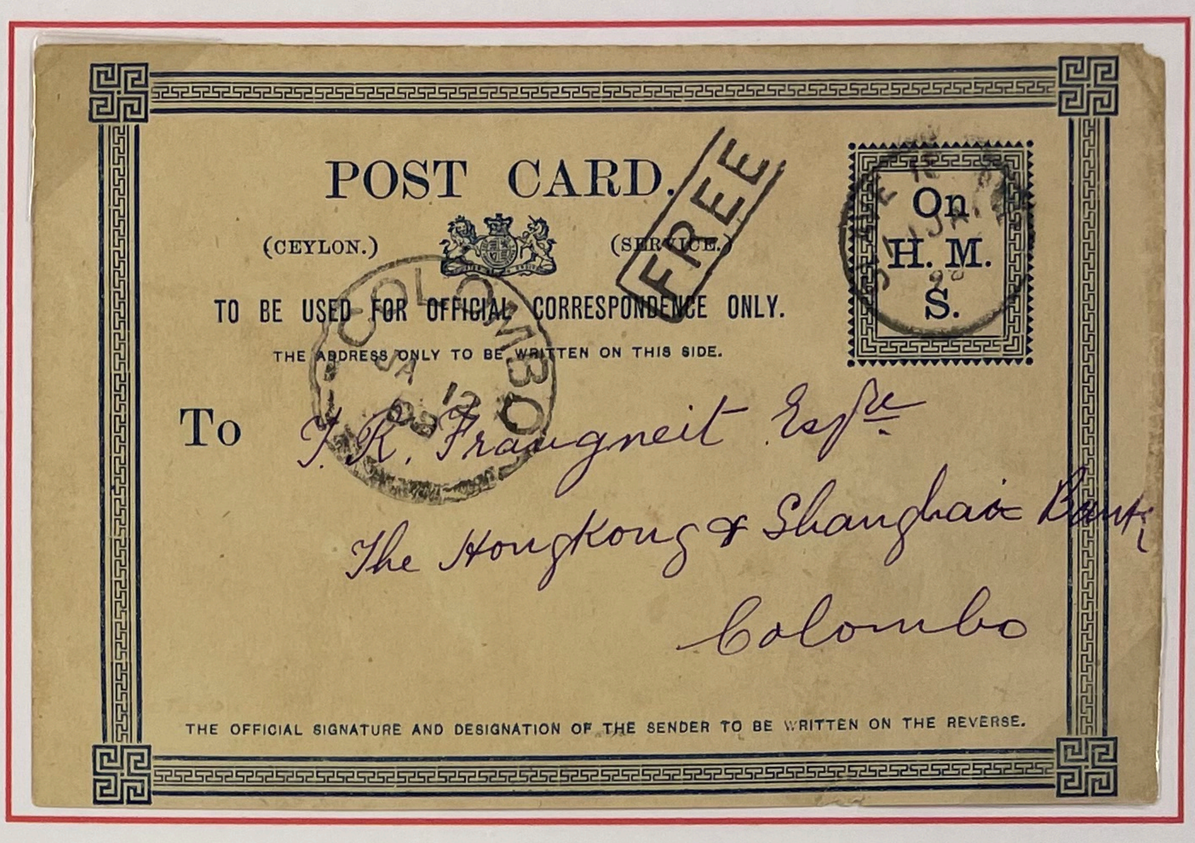
Type III January 11, 1898 →
Official mail, OHMS card and also handstamped FREE.

Most OHMS cards cancelled by Colombo GPO, not Slave Island.

On Reverse:

"You are requested to return your Ceylon Volunteer uniform without delay."

This regards Ceylon Planters Rifle Corp, a volunteer unit.


POST CARD.

(CEYLON.) (SERVICE.)

TO BE USED FOR OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE ONLY.

THE ADDRESS ONLY TO BE WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE.

FREE

On H. M. S.

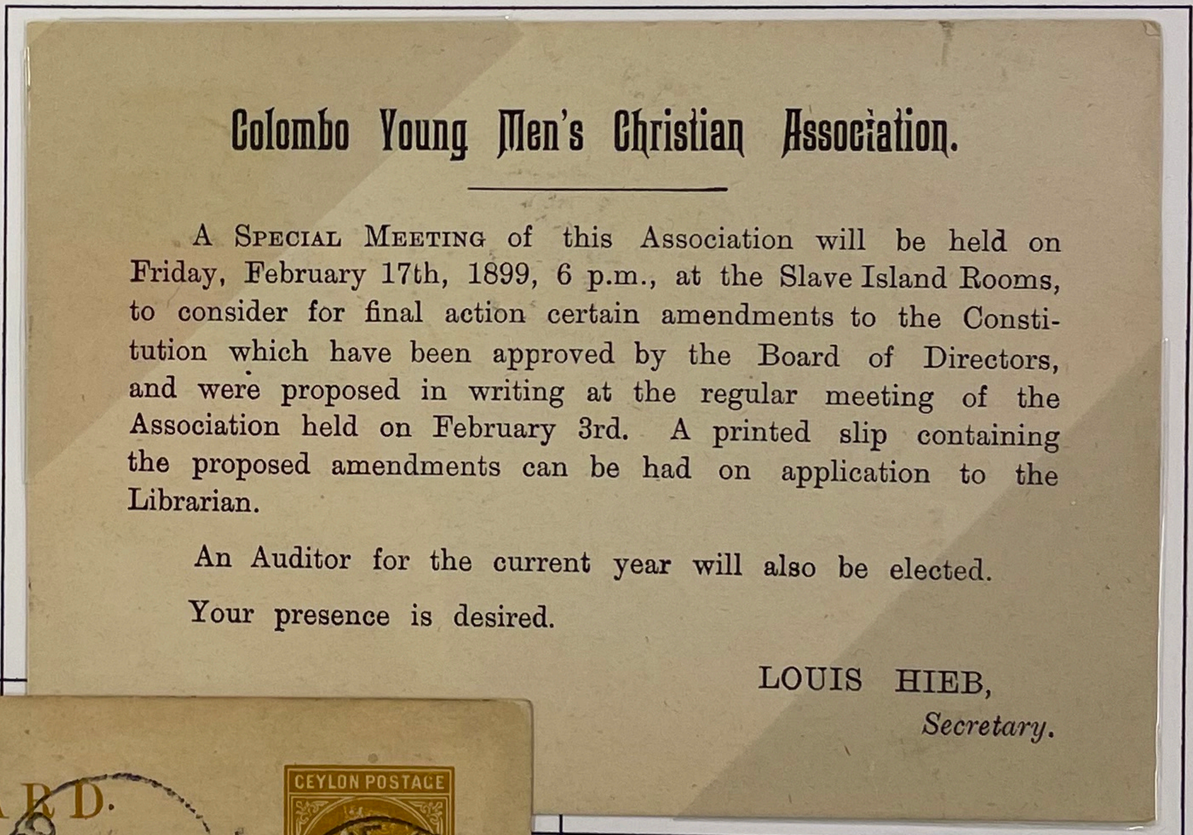
COLOMBO JA 13 99

To J. R. Fraugneit Esqre
The Hongkong & Shanghai Bank
Colombo

THE OFFICIAL SIGNATURE AND DESIGNATION OF THE SENDER TO BE WRITTEN ON THE REVERSE.

2 cent February 7, 1899 →
Domestic to Gammadua.

*1899 YMCA "Meeting... at the **Slave Island** Rooms"*


Colombo Young Men's Christian Association.

A SPECIAL MEETING of this Association will be held on Friday, February 17th, 1899, 6 p.m., at the Slave Island Rooms, to consider for final action certain amendments to the Constitution which have been approved by the Board of Directors, and were proposed in writing at the regular meeting of the Association held on February 3rd. A printed slip containing the proposed amendments can be had on application to the Librarian.

An Auditor for the current year will also be elected.

Your presence is desired.

LOUIS HIEB,
Secretary.


POST CARD.

THE ADDRESS ONLY TO BE WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE

ரிටලියනනට පතනක් මේඋන්ලියනු

மேல்வீலாசத்தைமாத்தீாம் இந்தப்பக்கத்தி லெழுதவும்

COLOMBO

CEYLON POSTAGE

SLAVE ISLAND 9 JA

2 CENTS

A. Alvis Esqre
Proctor S.C.
Colpetty

← 2 cent January 9, 1898

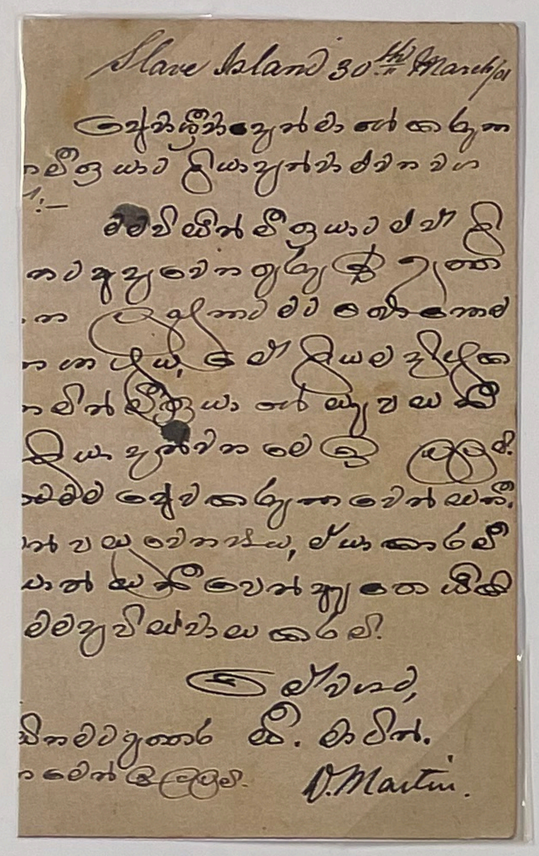
Cancel **date slug reversed**:
"9 Ja."

Evidence of multiple cancelling devices.

B. Victorian Slave Island Domestic Boer War Camp Mail

In Ceylon, Boer War prisoners were housed a number of camps from 1901 to 1904. The largest camp, **Diyatalawa**, located in central Ceylon.

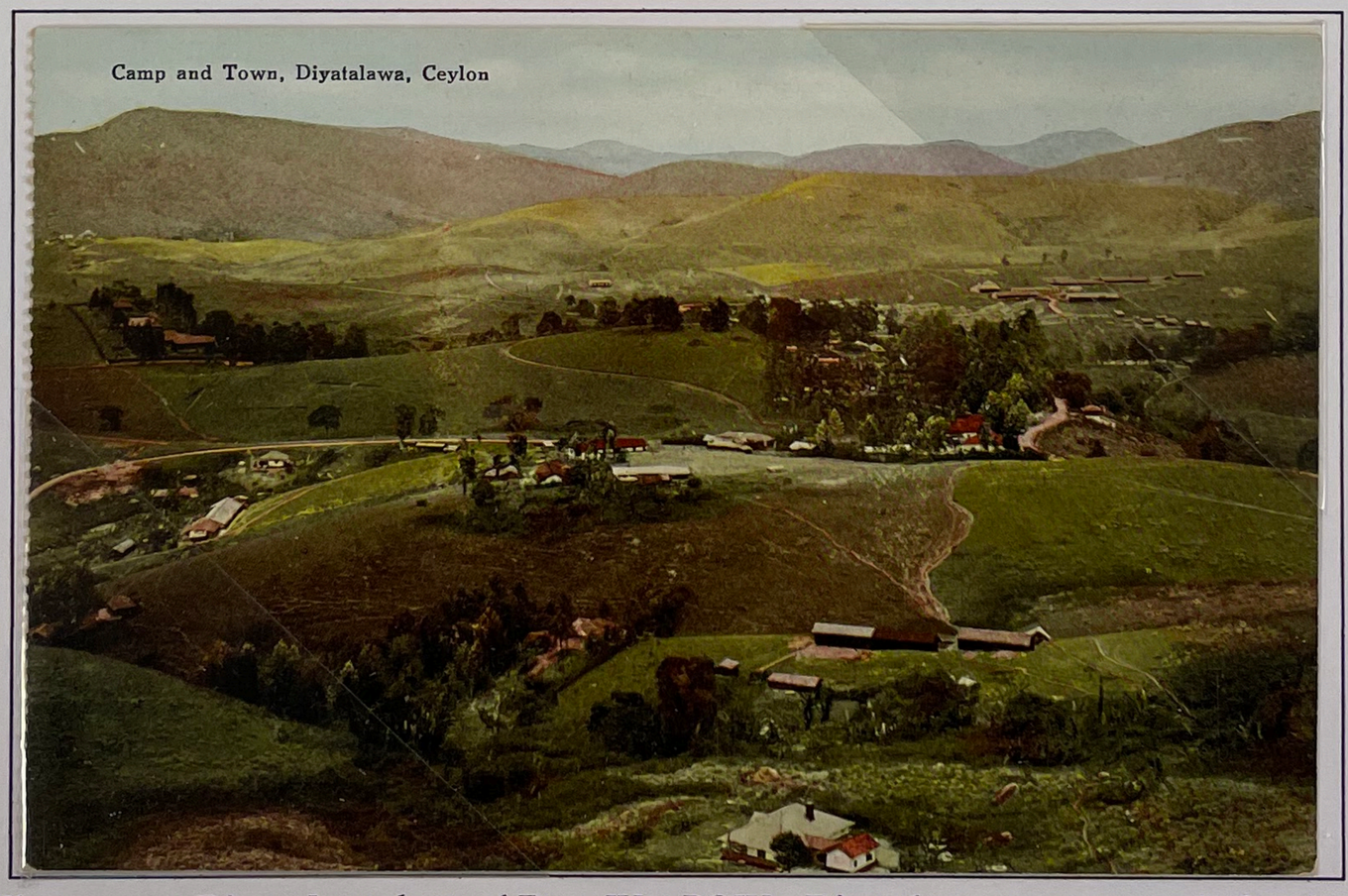
Censored Ceylon Boer War Camp from Slave Island



Sinhalese text on Reverse



2 cent domestic card with Type III cancel. Passed censor at camp.
Unusual Boer War card written in Sinhalese. Addressed to "James Appu" c/o "Charles Appuhany." Ceylonese words for son and father or supervisor. Employee letter censored.

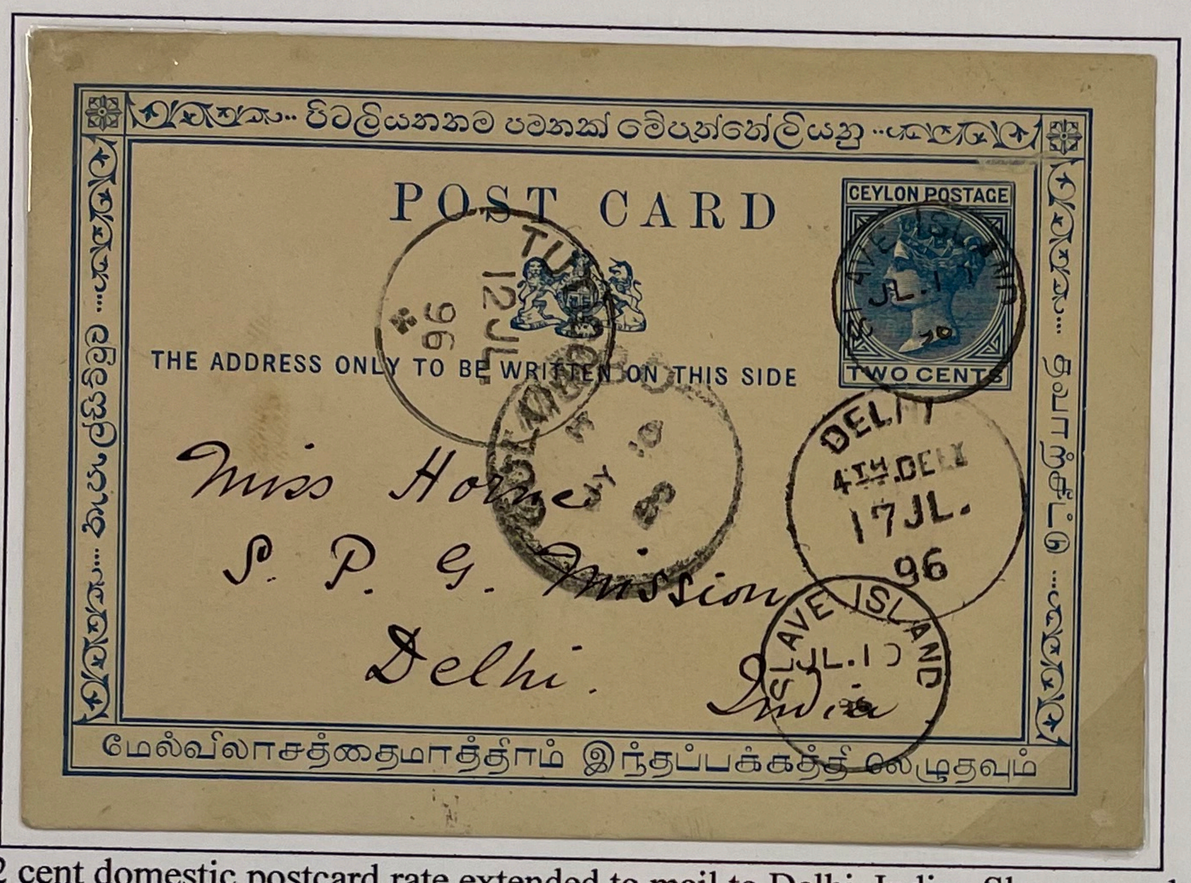


The camp at **Diyatalawa** housed Boer War POWs. Diyatalawa camp opened after the POW camp established in St. Helena filled. Shown on left perforated divided back card from booklet by John & Company, printed in Germany.

B. Victorian Slave Island

Foreign Mail to India

Mail to India moved at the Ceylon domestic rate. **More mail was being sent to and from India and Ceylon** because of expanded travel, trade and Indian migrant laborers working on tea plantations, and merchants selling in Ceylon.



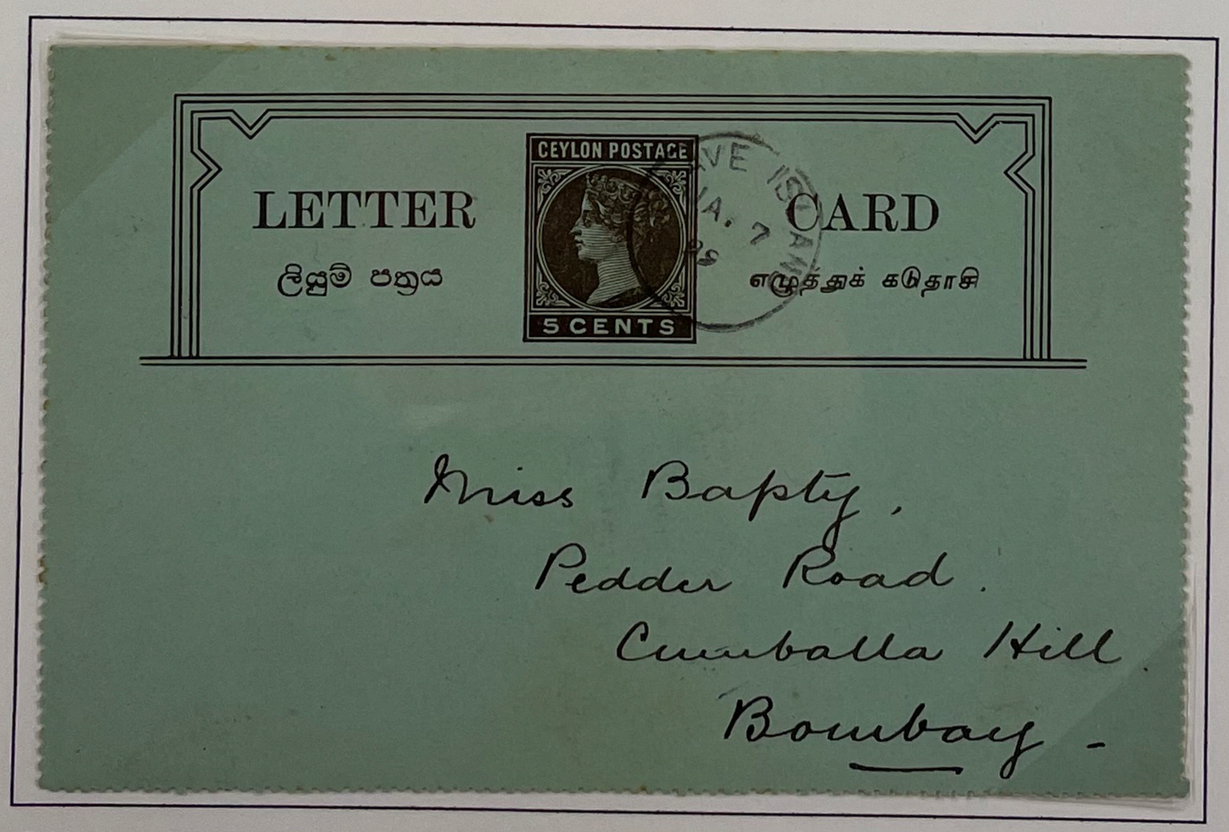
2 cent domestic postcard rate extended to mail to Delhi, India. Slave cancel and transit Type III on July 10, 1896.



Postal cancel used also on Ceylon Telegraph stamps.

Telegraph stamps bisected in use. Rate: 20 cents per word.

Provides early evidence of Telegraph operations at the Slave Island post office.



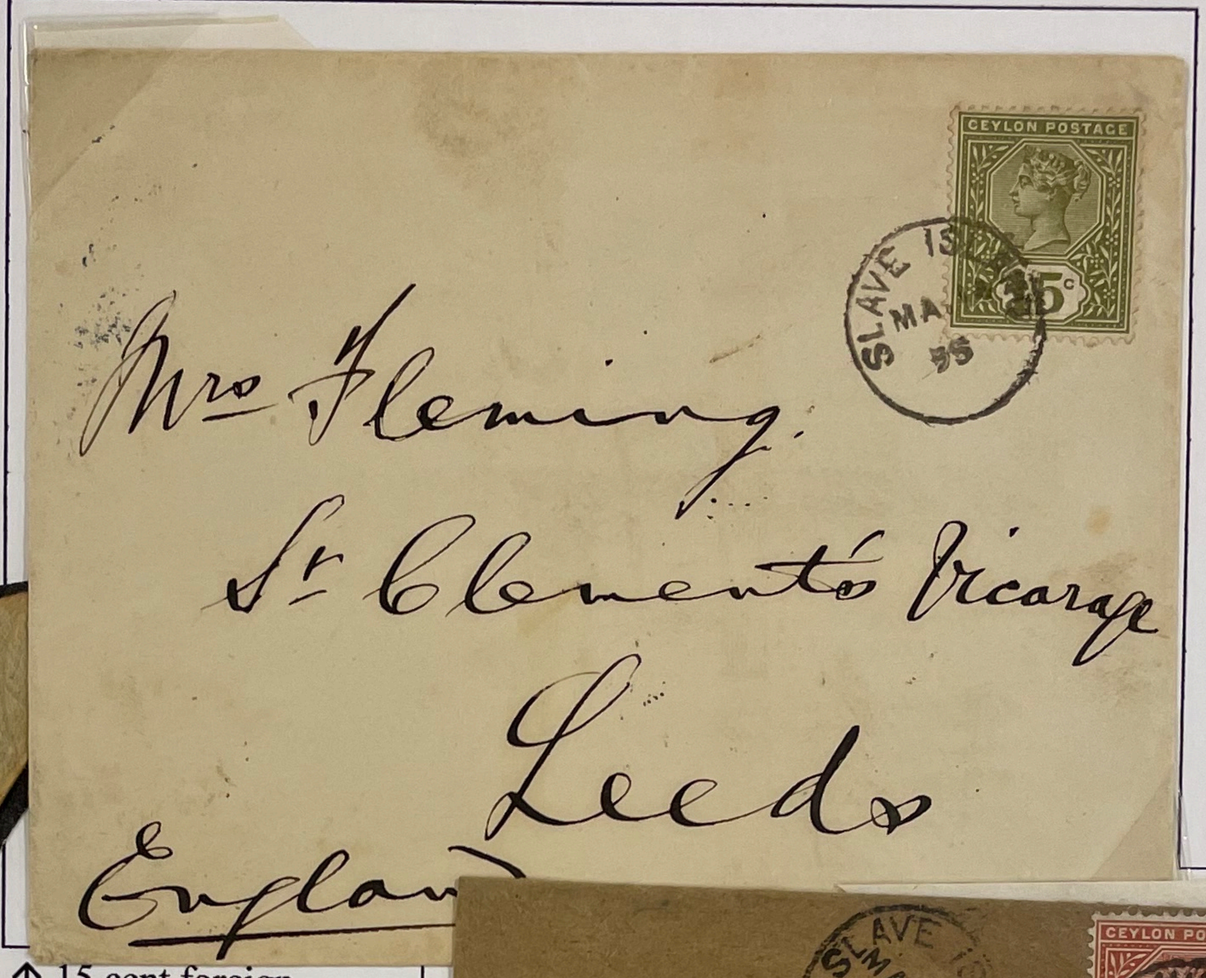
5 cent 1894 issued domestic letter card with Type III as cancel. Sent January 7, 1899 to Bombay.

B. Victorian Slave Island

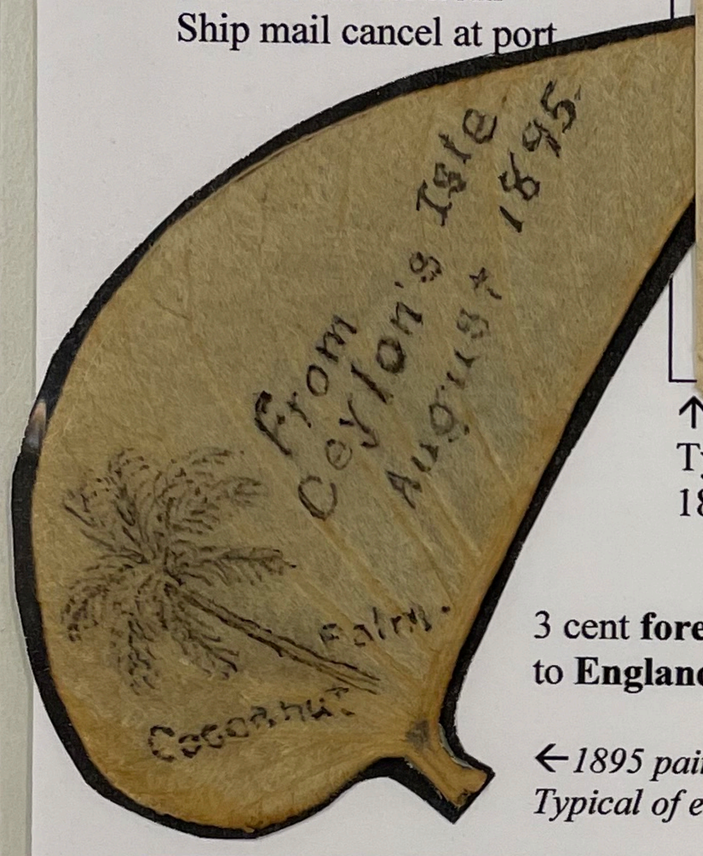
Foreign Mail to England



Slave Island cancel on Nevis stamp. Receiving mark or cancel from Ship mail cancel at port

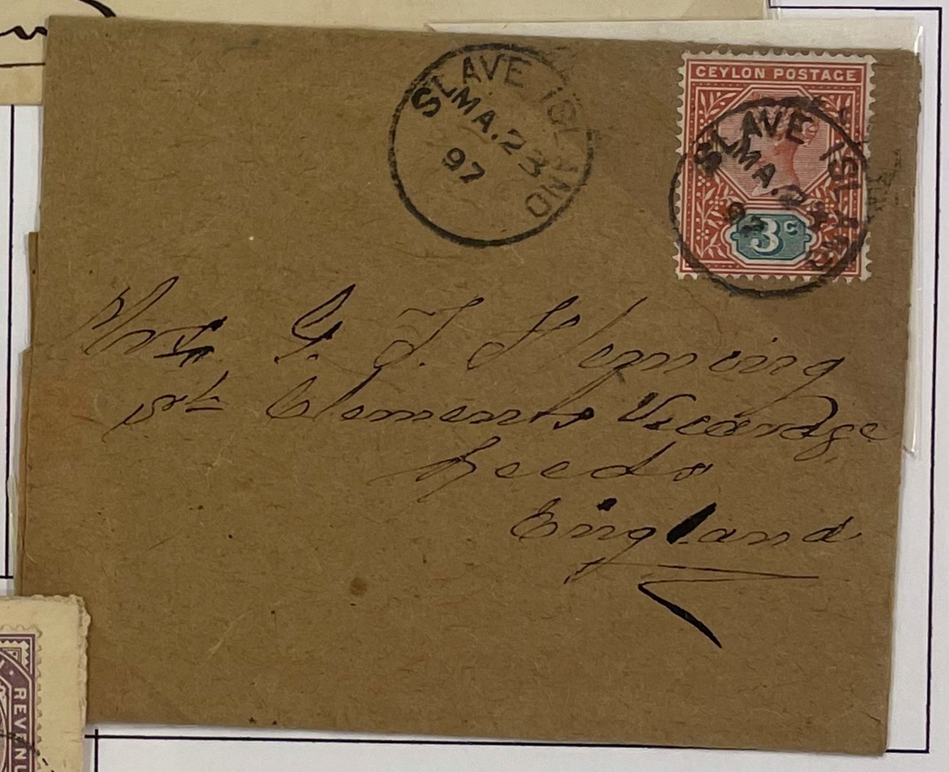


↑ 15 cent foreign Type III May 14, 1895 to **England**.



3 cent **foreign rate wrapper** → to **England** March 23, 1897.

←*1895 painted palm leaf Typical of early tourist items.*





15 cent foreign rate with Type III post-mark July 4, 1895 to **Leeds, England**.

Received July 22, 1895, 18 days delivery.

By the late 1890s more foreign mail is found going from Slave Island abroad.

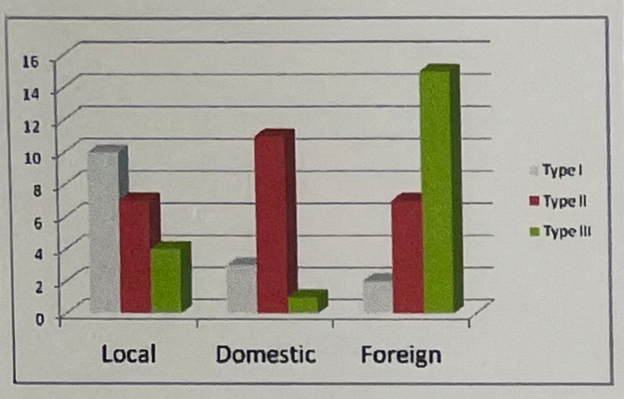
In addition to government and business offices, more shops and recreation were available in Slave Island. Ceylon's tea industry grew with primarily ***British investment*** *dollars. Improved ports made the island more assessable.*

B. Victorian Slave Island

Foreign Mail to Europe

While the Edwardian era began after the death of Queen Victorian in 1901, in Ceylon, Edwardian era stamps, postal stationery did not change over to the new format until existing stocks were depleted. Slave Island's Type III cancel, too, remained in use long after British and even Colombo, Ceylon's cancels were updated.

Mail Census Type III Cancel



Evolution of Slave Island mail from local to foreign shown by census.



6 cent foreign 1901 postcard rate to France. Slave cancel Type III on February 18, 1901

Final Month of Recorded Use →



Slave Island Type III Victorian era cancel , June 20, 1903 on 2c wrapper uprated for foreign use to **Germany**.

C. Edwardian Slave Island

Local Commercial Mail

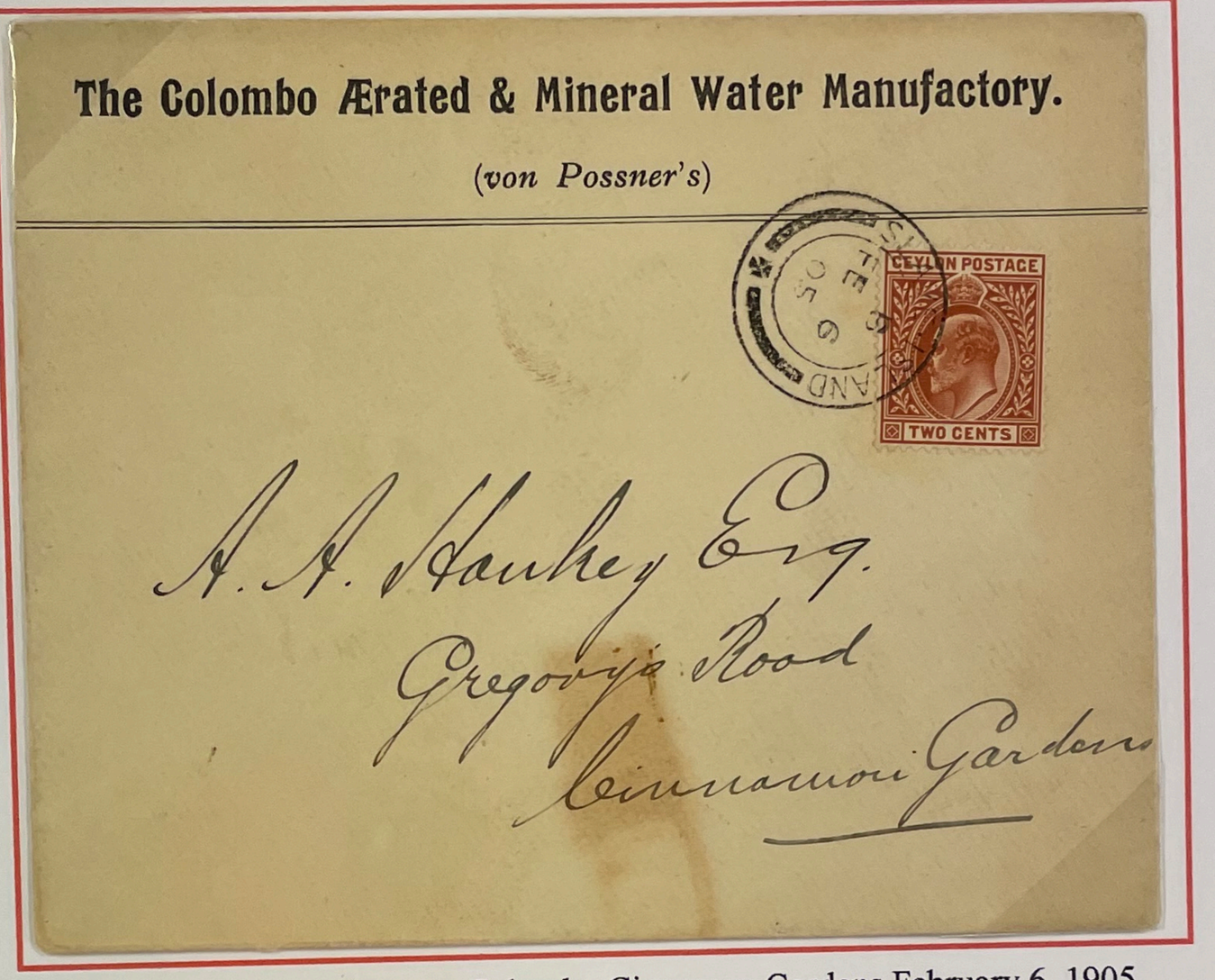


Edwardian Type I:
November 2, 1902
to April 4, 1910
25 mm

Used universally in the British Commonwealth, double circle cancels with the Maltese Cross came into use in Ceylon in late 1902, as the Edwardian Era began.



↑ **Early Usage:** December 10, 1902. Cancelled within a month of new cancel's use. Rate for is 6x weight foreign & registration fee, cancel on Victorian era stamps.



2 cent Type I local delivery to Colombo Cinnamon Gardens February 6, 1905.

Commercial cover from "*von Possner's*" *Colombo Aerated & Mineral Water Manufactory*. Owner Arthur von Possner developed this business on a freehold site adjoining the expanded *Colombo Ice Company* on Slave Island.

↓ **"Slave Lake" Stereoview:** 1908 Stereo-Travel Co. "Slave Lake in the center of Colombo, Ceylon" showing the easy water access and navigation used by businesses.



C. Edwardian Slave Island

Local Mail & Telegraph

During the Edwardian era, the Slave Island's post office continued as a convenient spot for local business mailing and telegraph communications.

Telegraph stamps bear the same Slave Island cancels as applied to postal items.

Rate 20 cents per word.

Telegraph stamp use abolished in Ceylon by August 1, 1910.



December 2, 1906 tied with telegraph form remains on back.



"Street Scene-Slave Island" gives a look at the area: tree lined lighted streets, improved walkways and well dressed patrons.

Colombo Apothecaries Co. Ltd. Turn of the century undivided back UPU card.

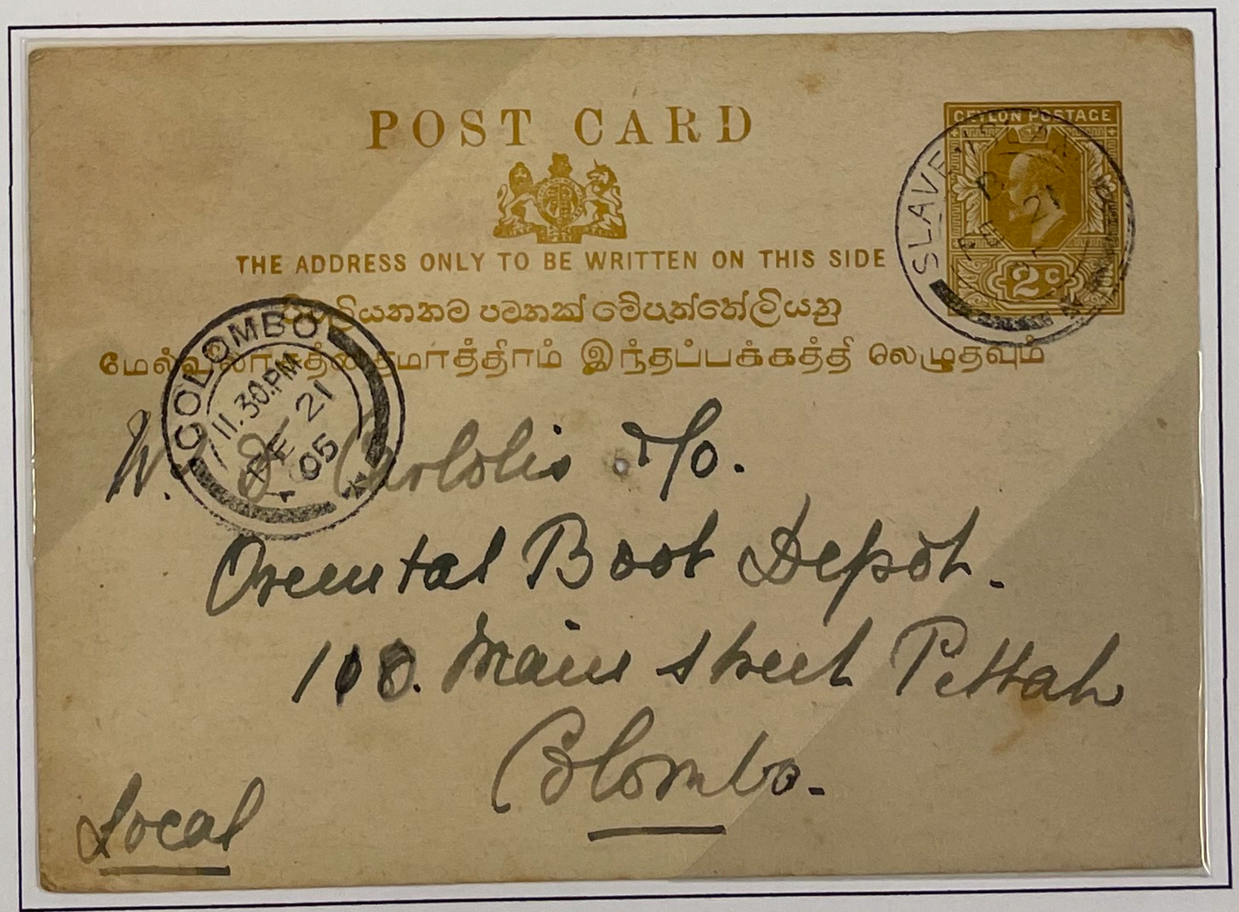
Telegraph stamps were typically bisected in use, half applied to the form and half given as receipt.

These cancelled and not bisected were applied to the telegraph form.



May 18, 1909

May 15, 1909

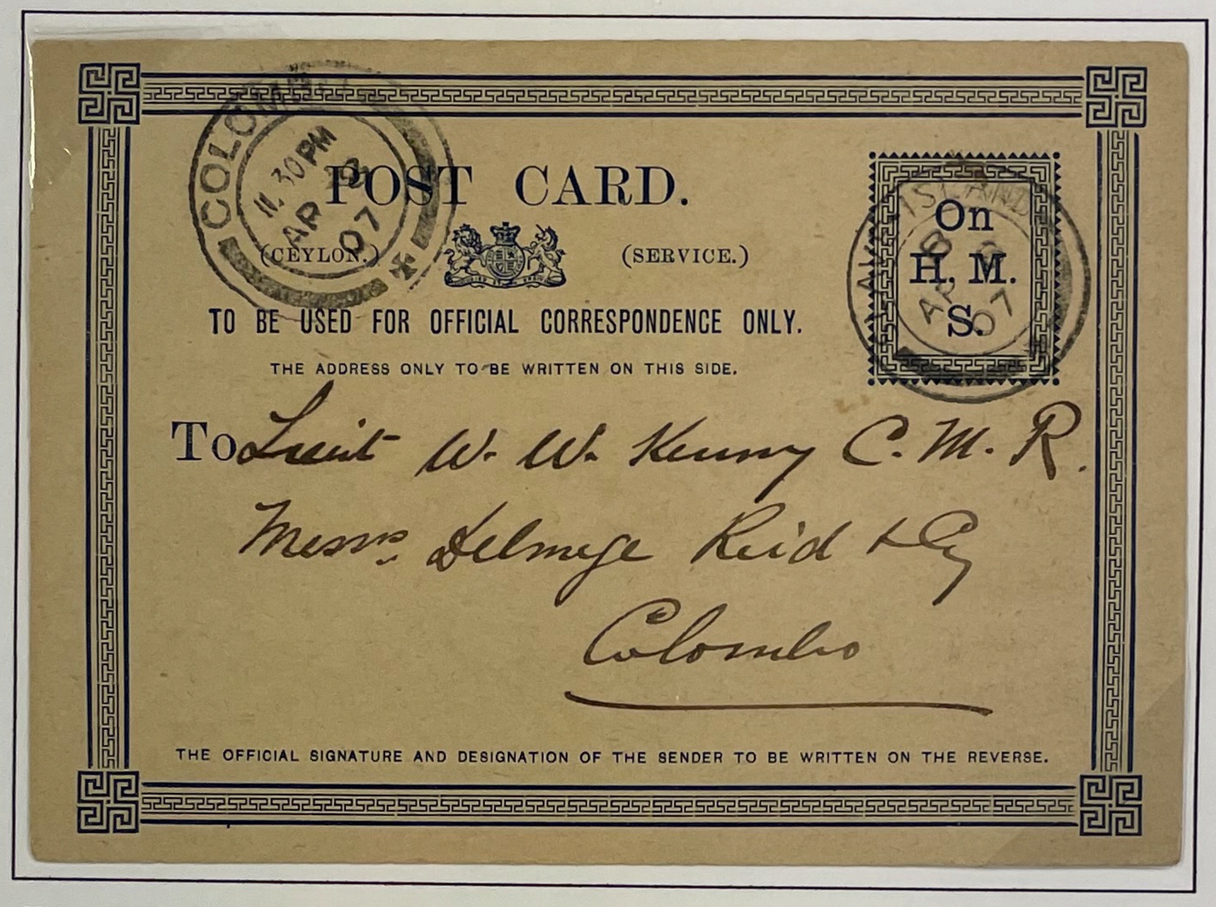


2 cent local type I cancel February 21, 1905, same day delivery to Colombo. Local mail to nearby Pettah shopping area with a book order.

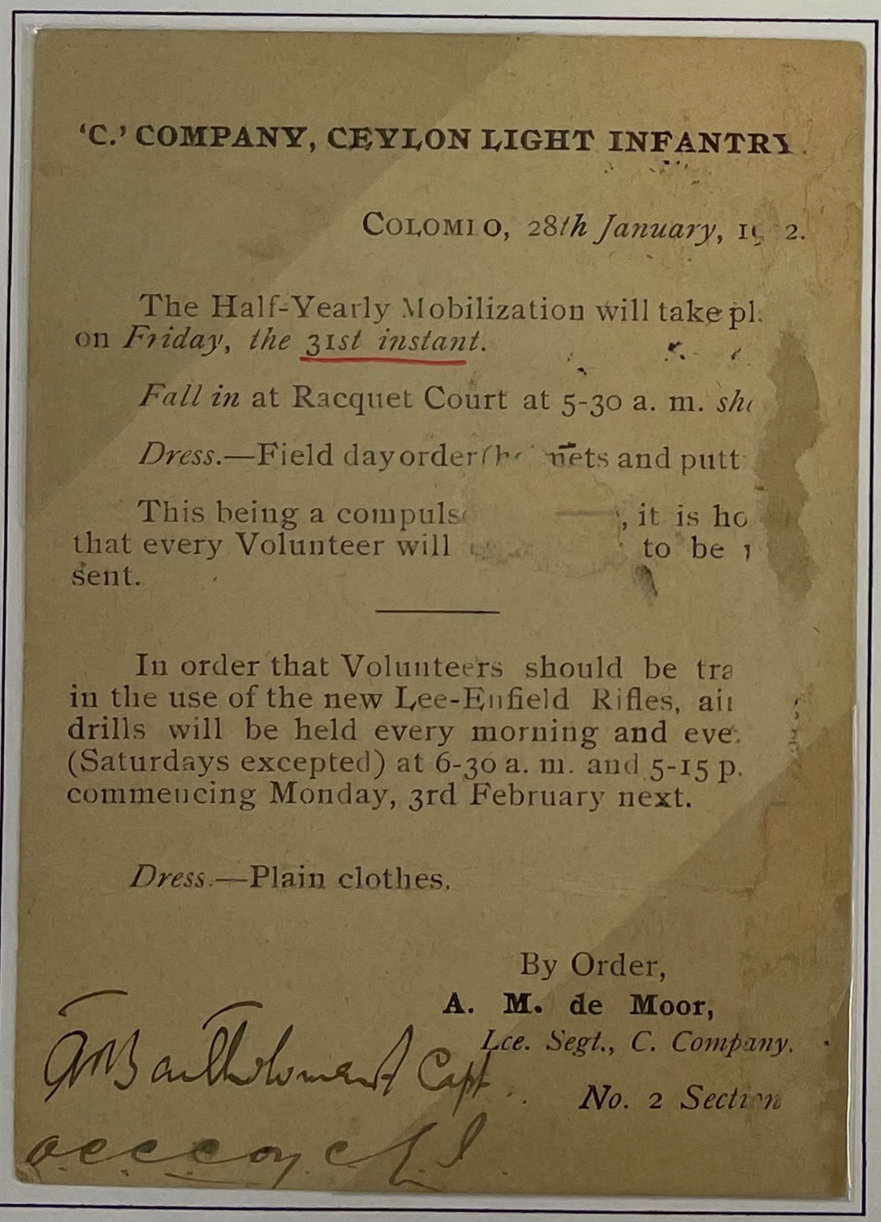
C. Edwardian Slave Island Local Military OHMS Mail

The size of Slave Island was expanded by landfill of Beira Lake. This provided space for a garrison for Ceylon Military Reserve use. These cards provide evidence of military drill operations of the Ceylon Planters Rifle Corps, active in peace and in wartime.

"If the C.M.R. are not using the range, I would greatly appreciate if the C.P.R.C. could have use of it."
— Captain C.P.R.C.



Free Mail OHMS with Type I cancel, April 8, 1907, official card.


'C.' COMPANY, CEYLON LIGHT INFANTRY.

COLOMBO, 28th January, 1902.

The Half-Yearly Mobilization will take pl. on *Friday, the 31st instant.*

Fall in at Racquet Court at 5-30 a. m. *sh.*

Dress.—Field day order (h. nets and putt.

This being a compuls. , it is ho. that every Volunteer will to be . sent.

In order that Volunteers should be tra. in the use of the new Lee-Enfield Rifles, ai. drills will be held every morning and eve. (Saturdays excepted) at 6-30 a. m. and 5-15 p. commencing Monday, 3rd February next.

Dress.—Plain clothes.

By Order,
A. M. de Moor,
Lce. Segt., C. Company.

No. 2 Section

"'C'" Company, Ceylon Light Infantry" Half-Yearly Mobilization

Free Mail OHMS January 29, 1902 addressed to **Slave Island** volunteer.

Card marked **"Not Known"**
Front shown at 70%.



C. Edwardian Slave Island

Foreign Mail

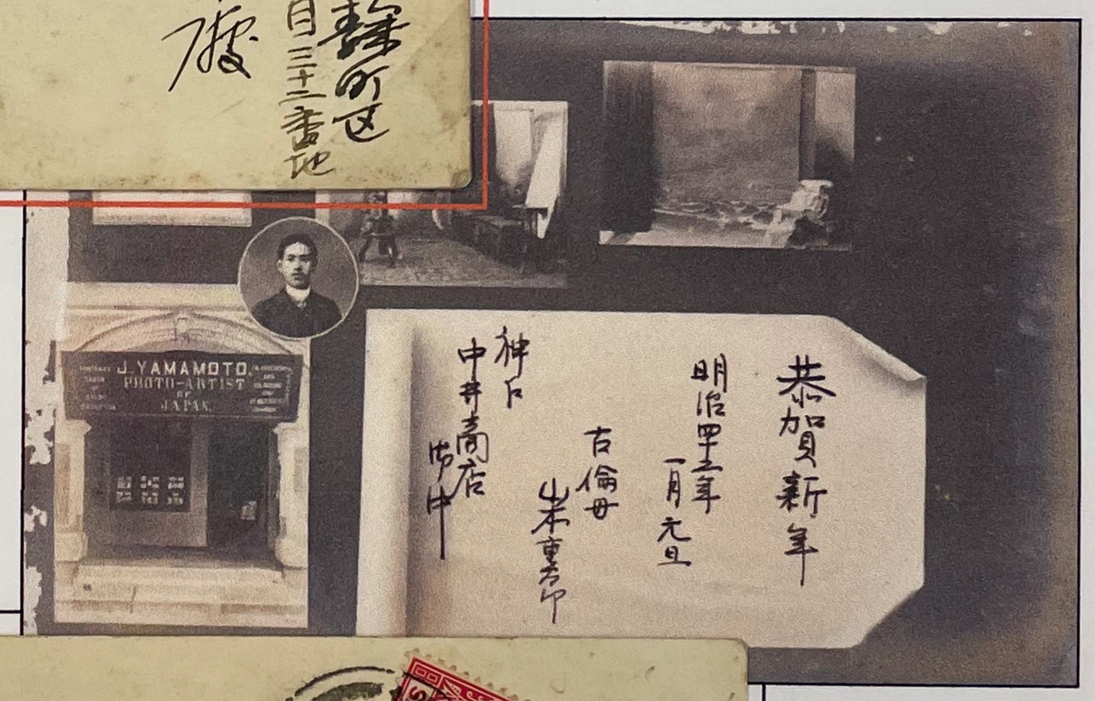
6 cent foreign via Hong Kong to Kobe, **Japan**. Type I cancel December 20, 1908, Victoria, Hong Kong transit January 4, 1909 and Kobe, Japan domestic receiving January 11, 1909.

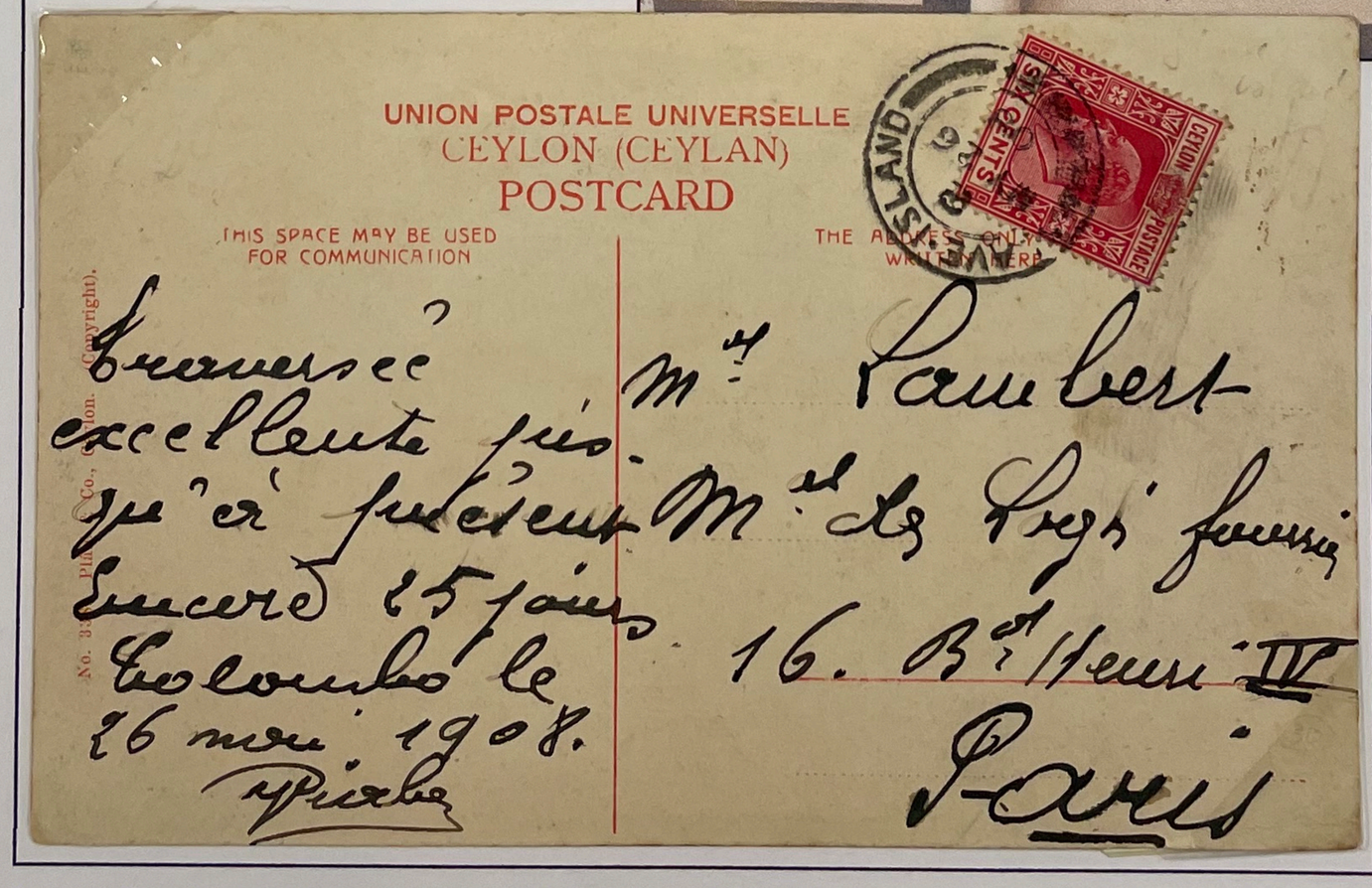


6 cent foreign via Hong Kong to Tokyo, **Japan**. Type I cancel March 6, 1909, arrival Tokyo April 2, 1909.

Limited mail found Ceylon to Japan.

Reverse: ***"J. Yamamoto Slave Island, Ceylon Photo-Artist of Japan"*** Real Photo PPC





6 cent foreign to **France,** May 26, 1906 on Plâtè & Co. UPU split back card.

C. Edwardian Slave Island

Foreign to India

← **Overfranked 6 cent** paying foreign post card rate. Mail to India allowed domestic 2 cent rate extended for **India only**.

Card sent by a tourist, with Type I cancel July 29, 1907.



↑ Colorized RPPC undivided back by Spencer & Company, India. Slave Island receiving marked on reverse next day.



5 cent letter rate with Type I October 26, 1906 → Mission mail.

"Street Scene, Slave Island, Colombo"
3c souvenir handback.
UPU split back card.



C. Edwardian Slave Island

Foreign Tourist Mail

Tourists enjoy Ceylon's harbor towns, but increasingly also take trips "up country" to the cool mountain tea plantations. These cards mailed from reflect travels through and within the island.

6 cent foreign to **Canada** →
November 5, 1904 on Plâtè & Co. split back UPU card.

Reverse: female tea pickers.





6 cent to Alexandria, **Egypt** March 14, 1907.

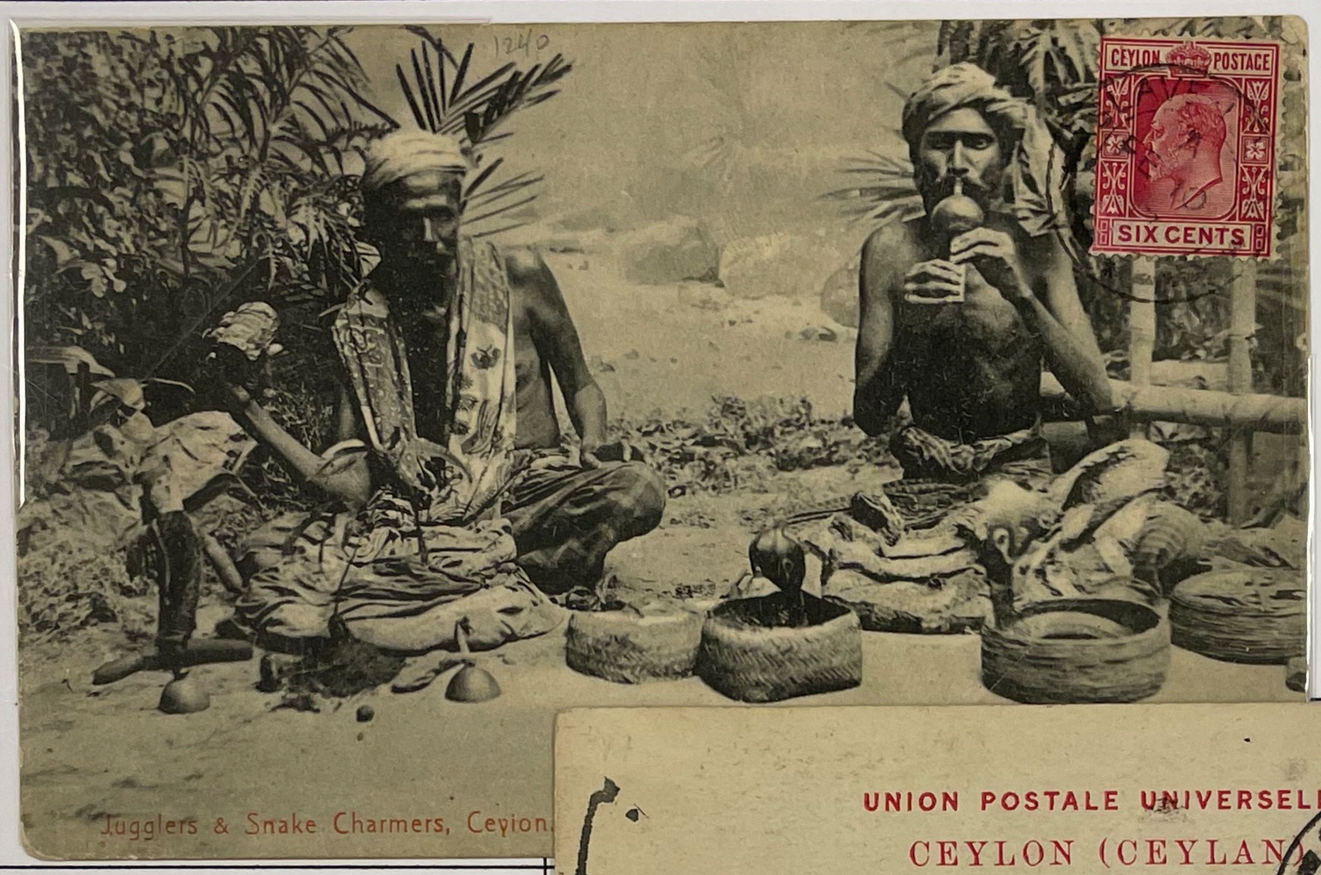
Handstamped:
"Pro Cooperative Tea Garden"

"Union Place, Slave Island Colombo"
by Plâtè & Co. Ceylon.
Lithographed UPU divided back postcard. →



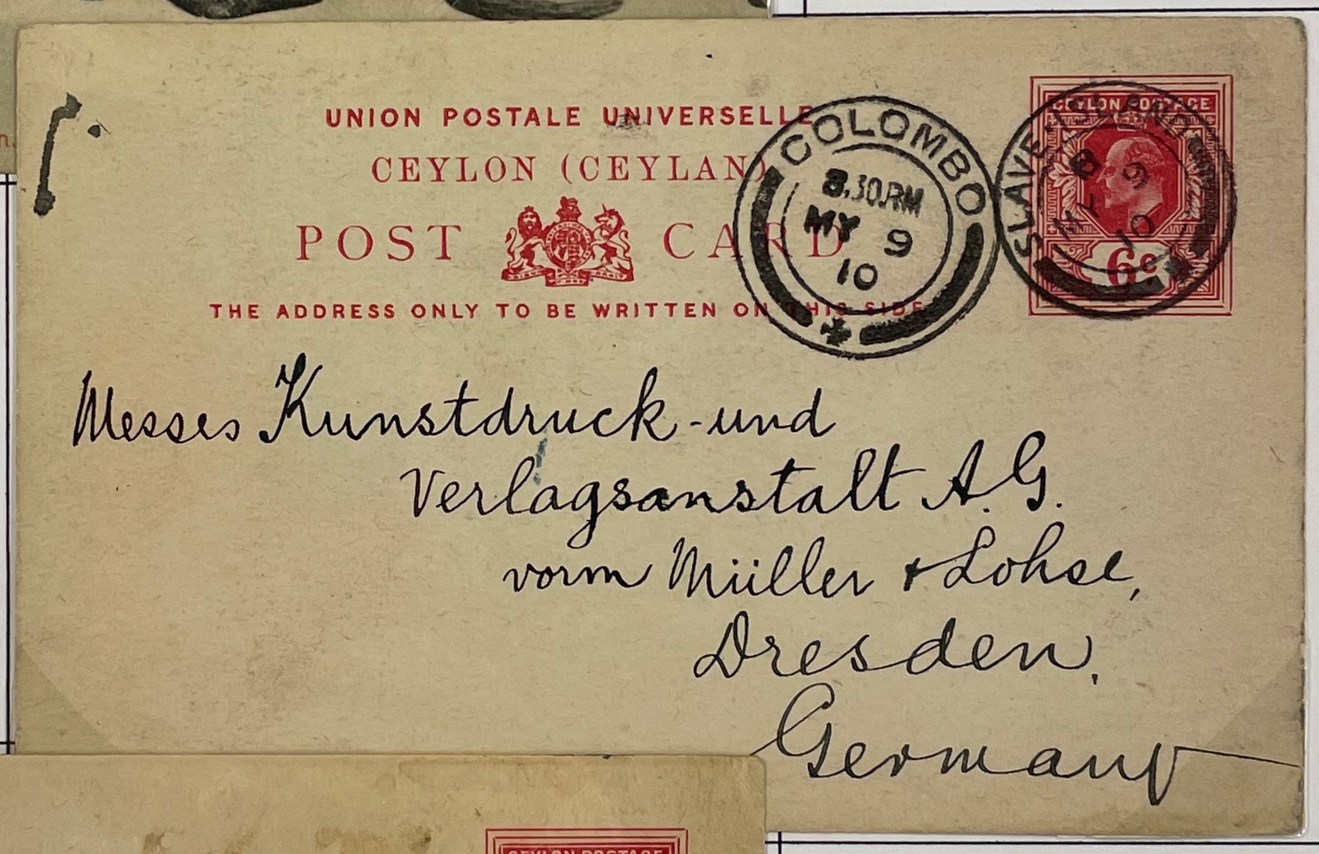
C. Edwardian Slave Island

Foreign Mail to Europe



"Jugglers & Snake Charmers"

6 cent Type I cancel to **England**, February 10, 1907 on Plâtè UPU card.



Contrasting 25 mm → Slave Island cancel with adjacent 30 mm Colombo.

"6c" in numerals to **Germany** May 9, 1910.

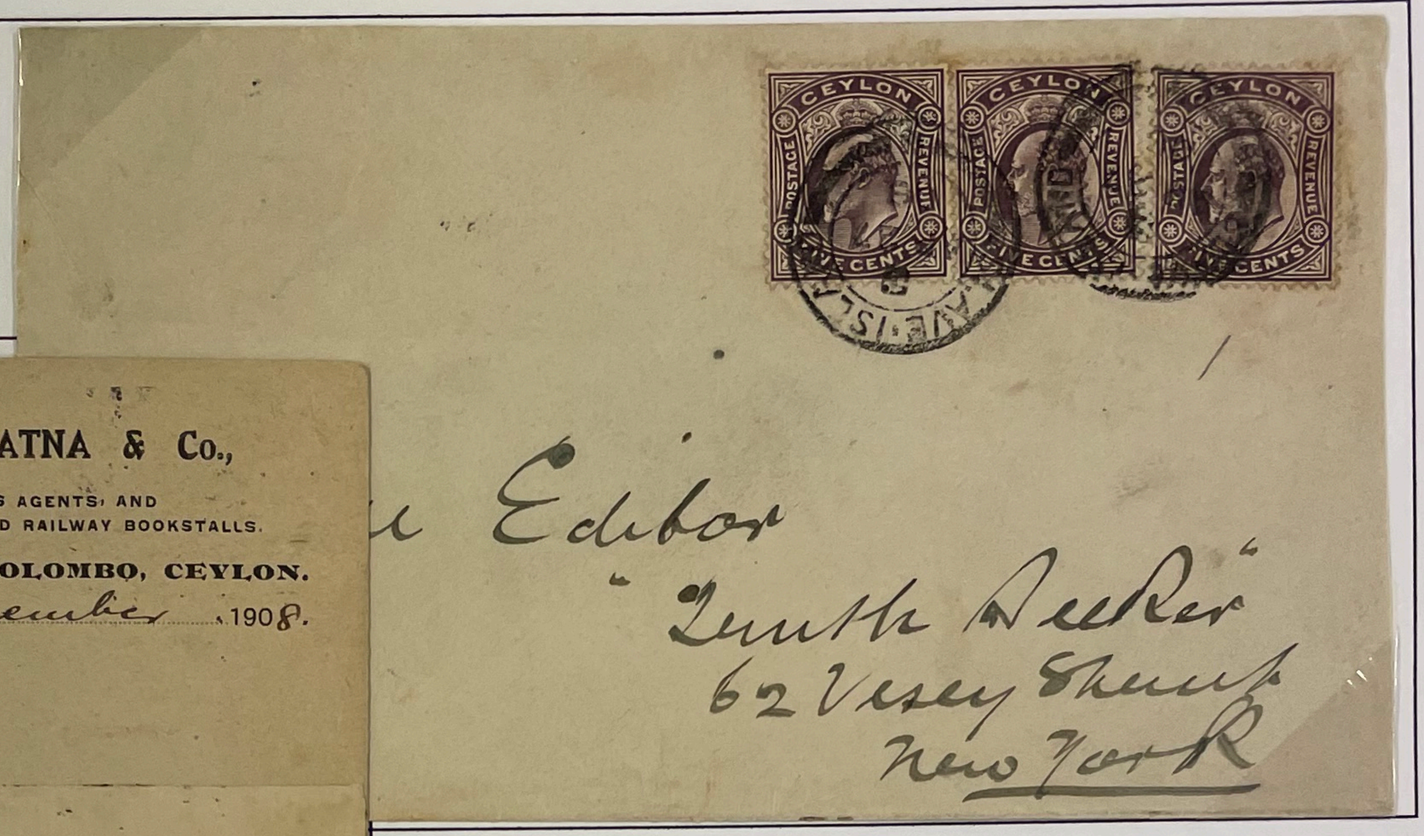


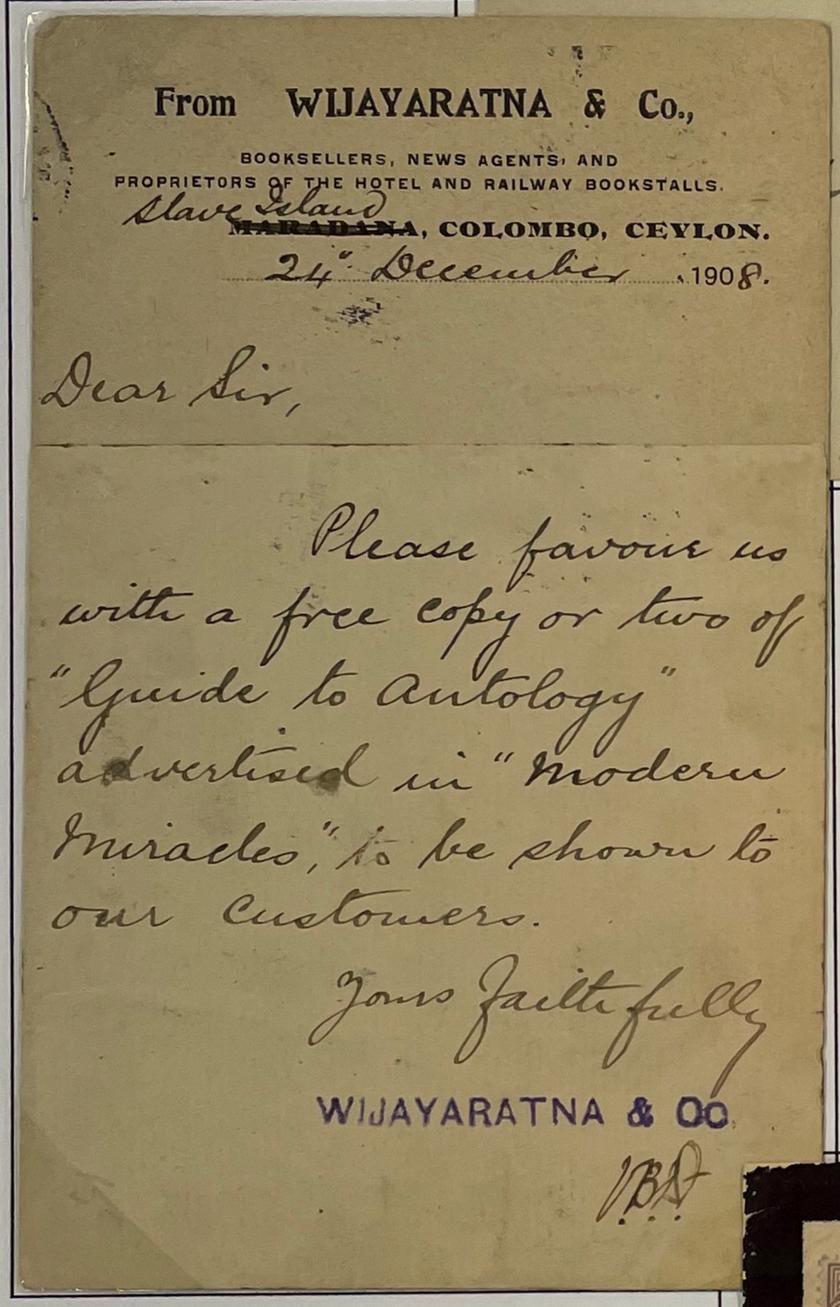
" Six Cent" foreign to **Germany**. May 26, 1906 on Plâtè UPU card.

C. Edwardian Slave Island

Foreign to United States

15 cent foreign letter to **New York** with Type I cancel April 27, 1908.→




From WIJAYARATNA & Co.,
BOOKSELLERS, NEWS AGENTS, AND
PROPRIETORS OF THE HOTEL AND RAILWAY BOOKSTALLS.
Slave Island
MARADANA, COLOMBO, CEYLON.
24th December 1908.

Dear Sir,

Please favour us with a free copy or two of "Guide to Autology" advertised in "Modern Miracles," to be shown to our Customers.

Yours faithfully

WIJAYARATNA & CO.

Business Growth:
Store address marked from Maradana neighborhood of Colombo to Slave Island. Wijayaratna & Co has multiple locations -

Bookseller New Agents
Hotel and Railway Bookstalls

← 6 cent UPU card to **Chicago**, redirected to Highland Park, IL December 24, 1908.

15 cent foreign letter with three Type I strikes, sent June 1, 1904. Mourning cover to **Chicago**. Handstamped with paid marking when forwarded to **Creston, IA**.



C. Edwardian Slave Island

Foreign Mail



Six cent and Two cent with Type I cancel to **Germany**, March 18, 1907, overpaid on Plâtè UPU card.



Seven definitives with → four Slave Island cancels on philatelic partial or parcel, December 1, 1913.



Real photo, reverse caption, "Looking along the canal road"



"Native Shops, Ceylon"

Plâtè UPU card, reverse notation, Printed in Saxony.

C. Edwardian Slave Island

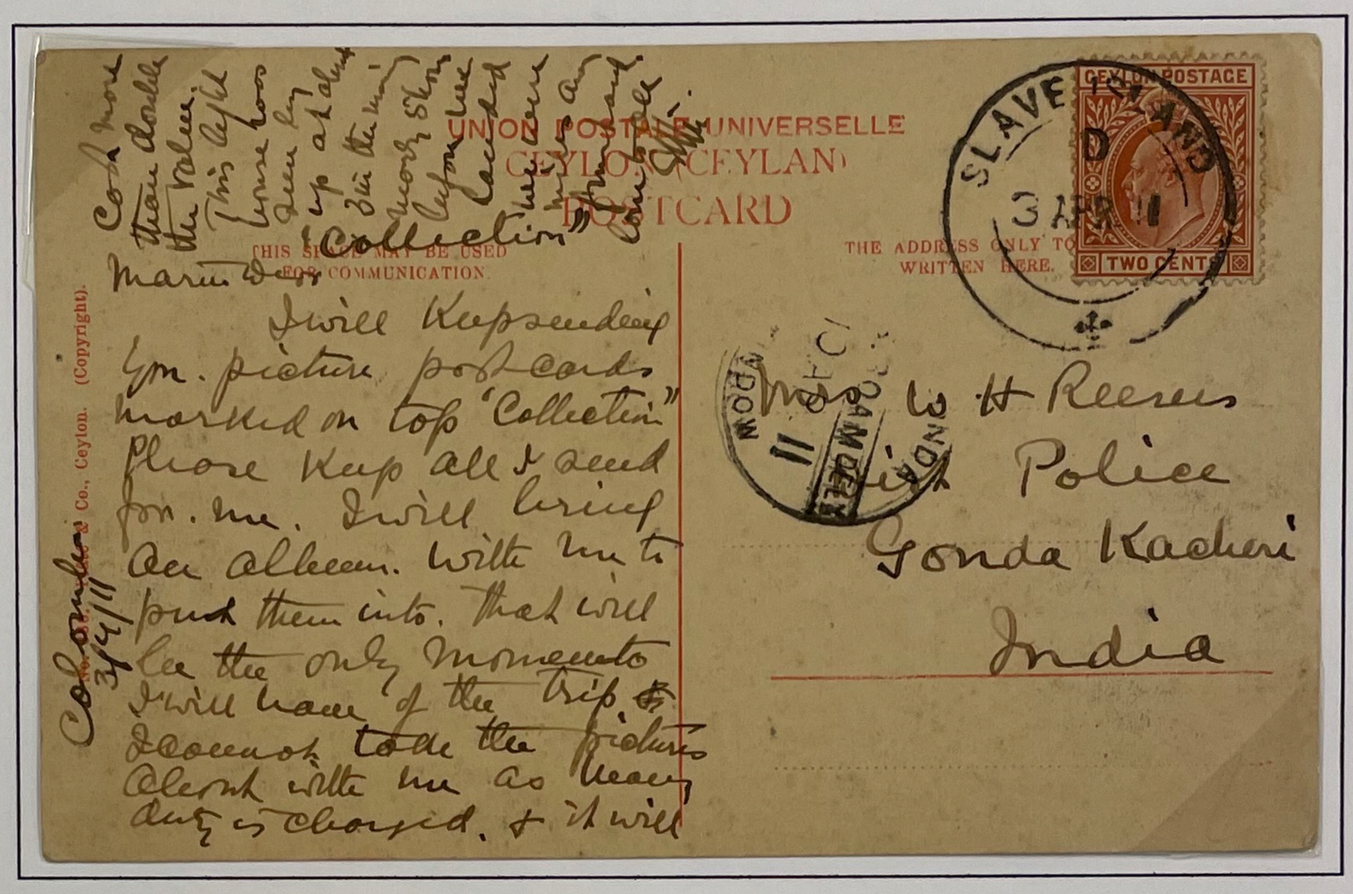
Foreign Mail

Type II Cancel

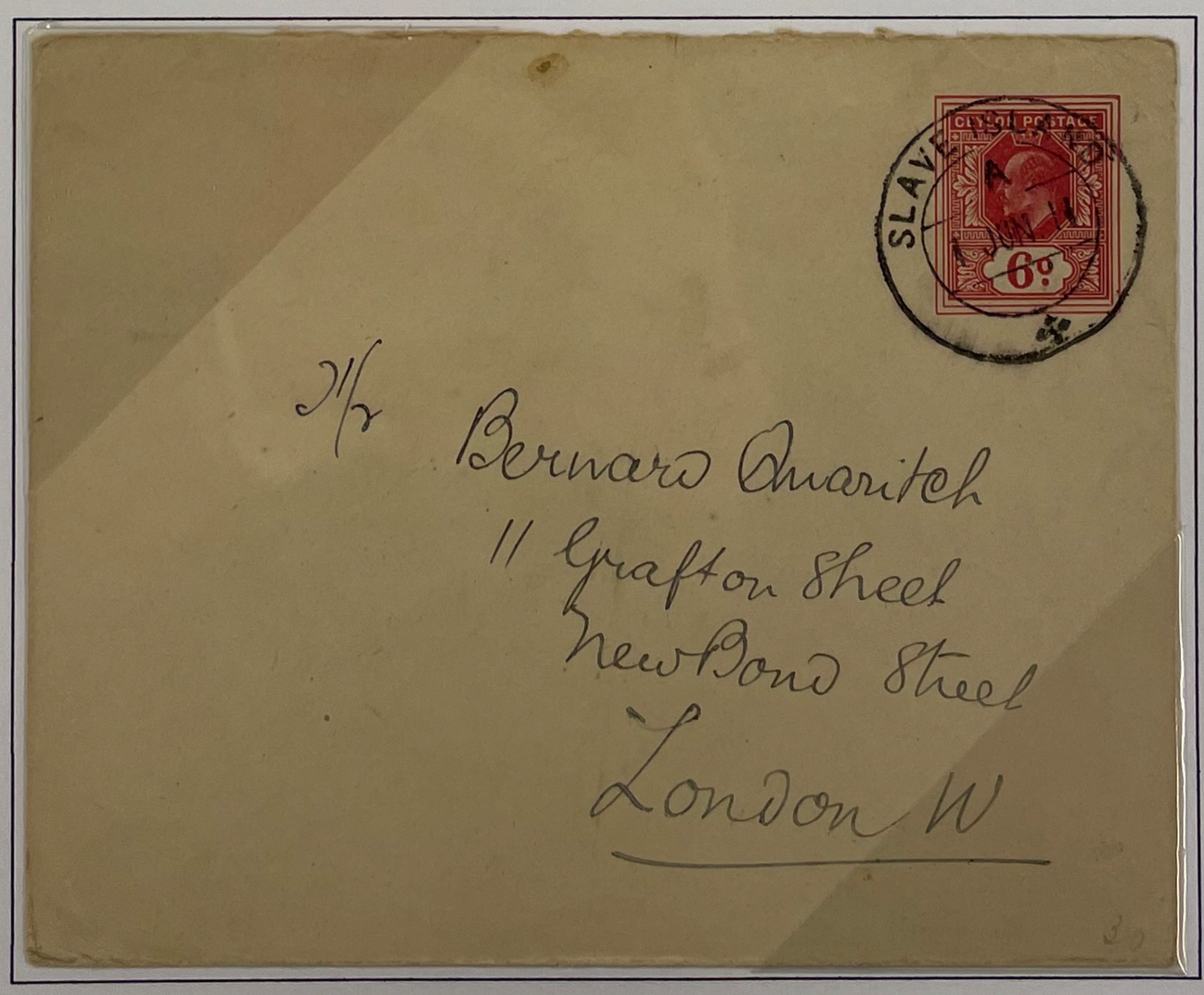
The Type II features two horizontal lines above and below the date, and the replacement thick bar obliterator of Type I, and a restyled Maltese cross. Known as a "cog wheel", this postmark was used until the end of World War I.



Type II:
December 1, 1910
to October 17, 1919
30 mm



2 cent domestic extended rate to **India**, April 3, 1911, receiving marked April 11, 1911.

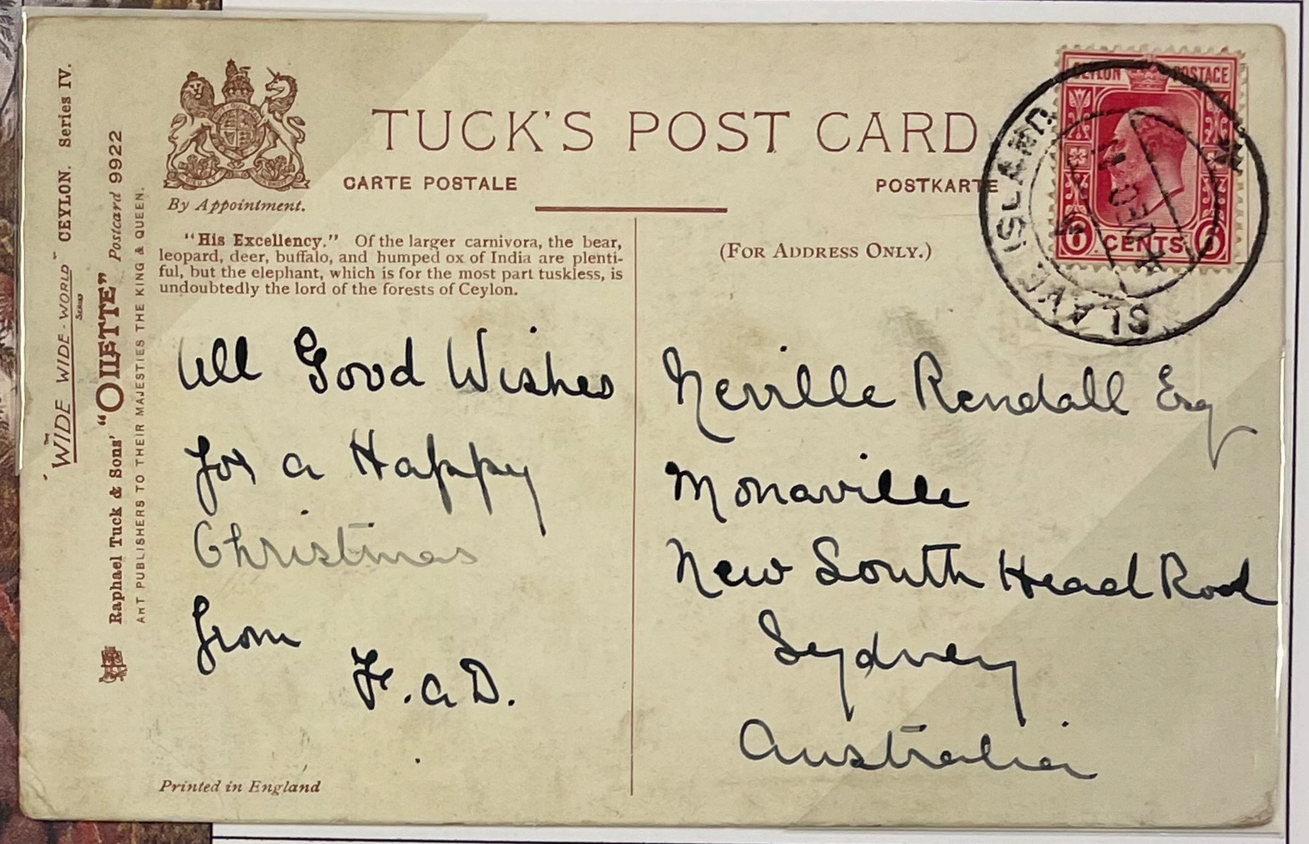


6 cent foreign
stationery to
England,
June 1, 1911.

C. Edwardian Slave Island

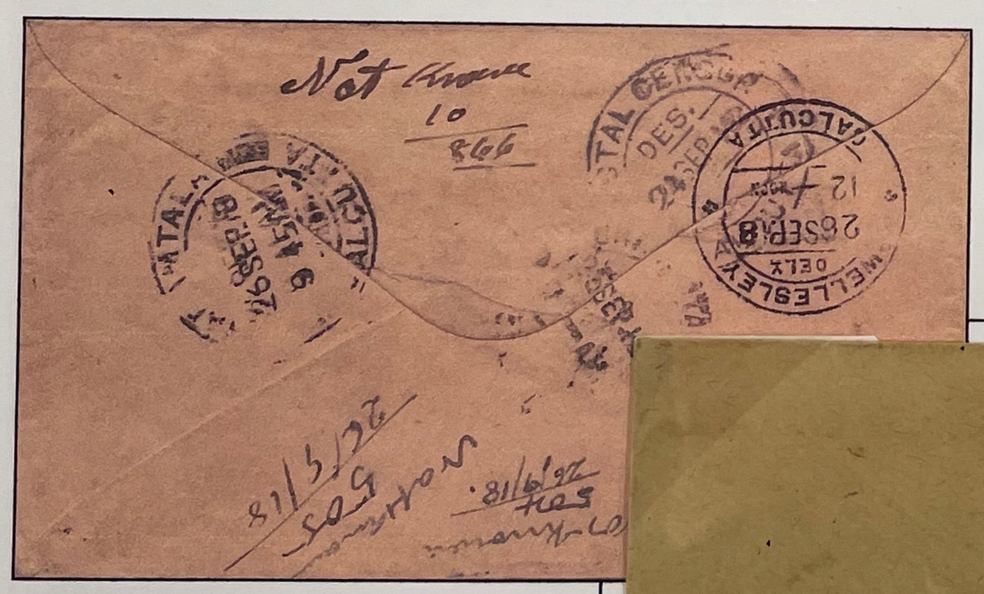
Foreign Mail





6 cent foreign Type II sent December 4, 1911 to Sydney, **Australia** with Christmas greeting.

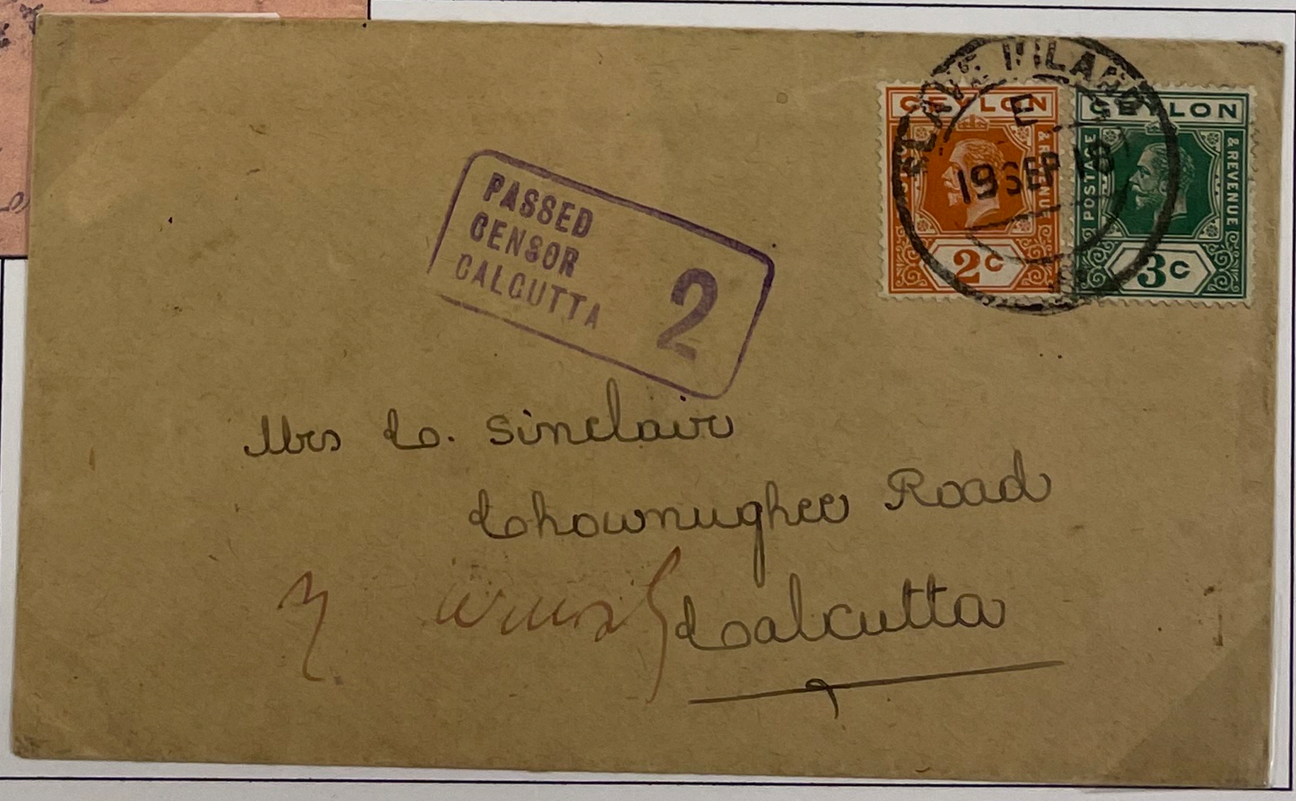
Tourist traditional Ceylon image from Tucks "Oilette" art publishing.



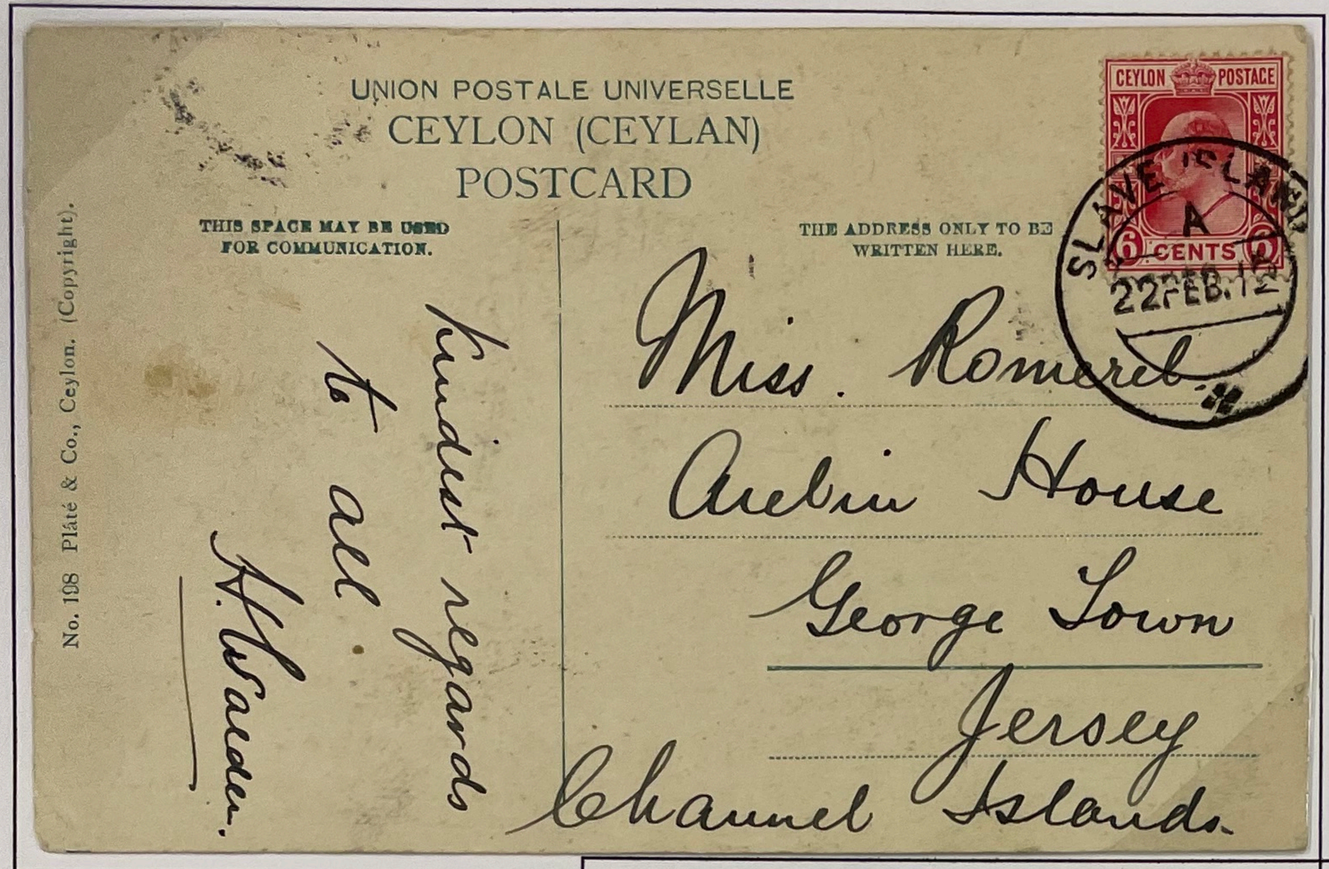
Reverse: Postal Censor markings September 24, 1918.

Marked addressee "Not Known" three delivery attempts.

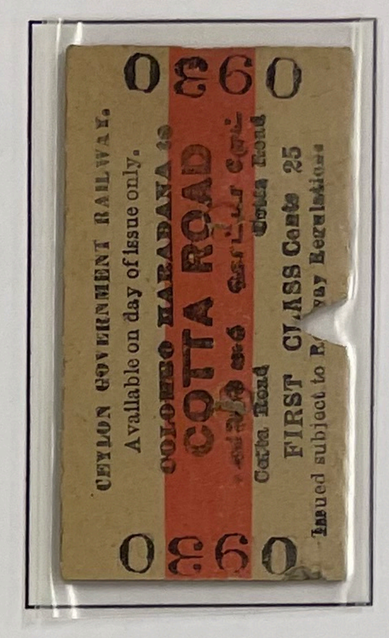
5 cent extension rate to Calcutta, **India.** September 19, 1918. →



C. Edwardian Slave Island Foreign Tourist Mail to Europe



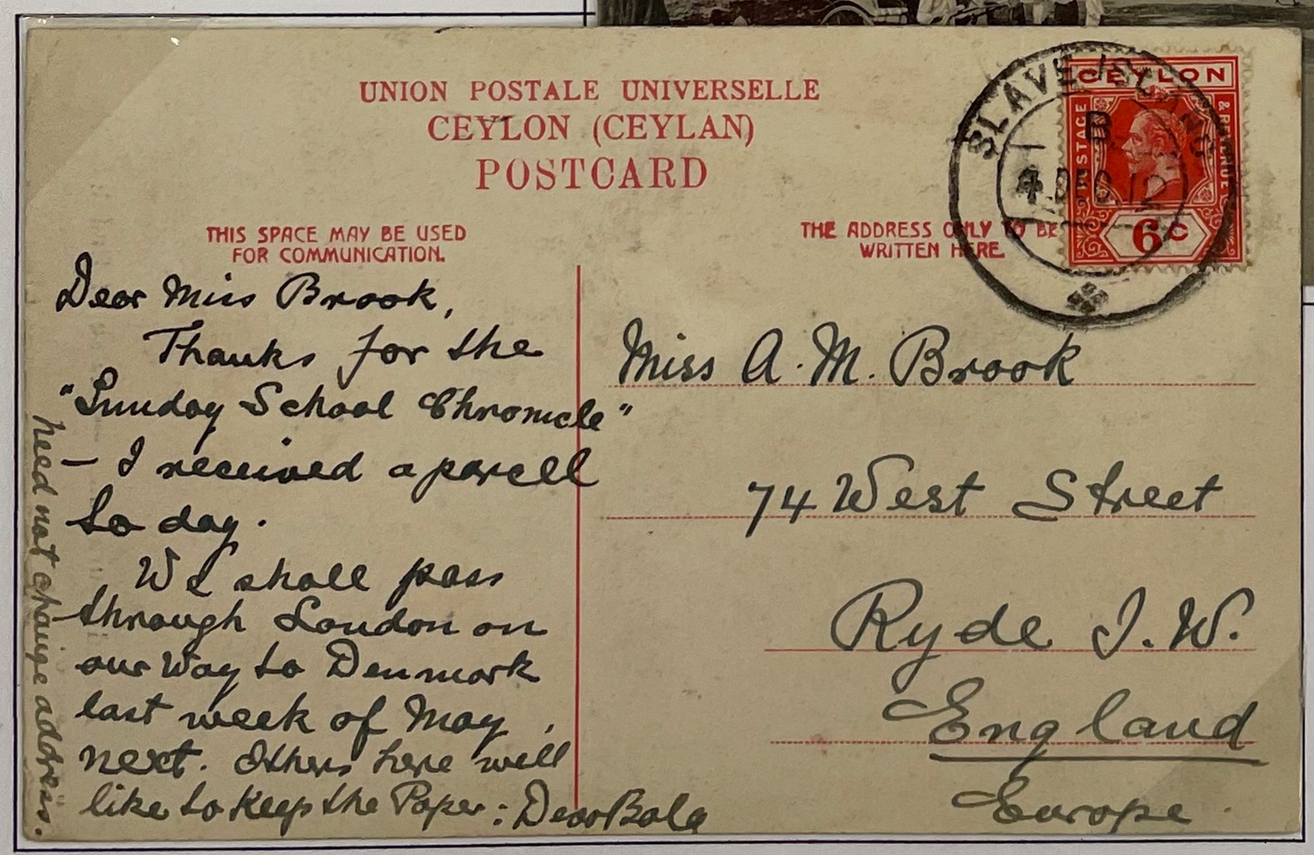
6 cent foreign to Jersey, **Channel Islands.** Type II cancel February 22, 1912.



Used Ceylon Railway Ticket Routes through Slave Island



"Street Scene, Slave Island"
Plâtè divided back lithograph card, printed in England. →

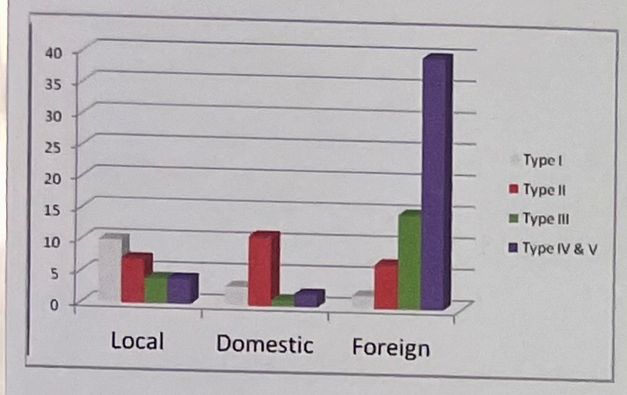


6 cent foreign to **England**, Type II December 4, 1912.

Images on the post cards of tourist mail provides views of Ceylon at points in time. Here poor Tamil children and images from a Buddhist ruins, all a short train ride from Slave Island, are provided on the reverse.

C. Edwardian Slave Island Foreign Tourist Mail to Europe

Mail Census:
Edwardian Era comparison

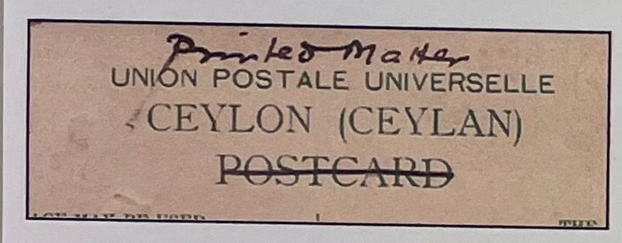


Edwardian era mail increasingly to foreign destinations as compared to earlier times.



Correctly franked with 3 cent **Printed Matter rate** January 15, 1913. Appears underpaying foreign 6 cent rate to **Belgium**. Sent with only message handstamp, "Michael J. De Jong, Colombo, Ceylon"

Evidence of Tea plantations business as a growing tourist interest.



On reverse, "Post Card" crossed out and "Printed Matter" written in by hand, this saves 3 cents.

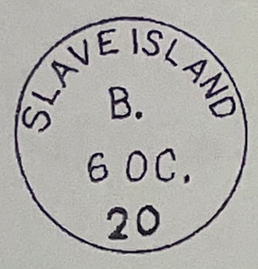


6 cent foreign to **Germany** Type II on George V card May 13, 1913.

D. King George V Slave Island

Wartime Mail

Ceylon supported war efforts with local troops joining forces. War bases in Ceylon were coastal operations strategically located to hold back Japanese incursion. At nearby Fort, Colombo both Army and Navy forces served. Slave Island was a nearby shopping and recreation center.



Type I:
January 10, 1919
to August 30, 1928
25 mm

A new King George V cancel, reduced in size and returned to the single ring format.

The cancel is first seen on wartime mail, overprinted for war tax purposes. Simple local wartime design.

Earliest Recorded Use →
January 10, 1919
Cancelled predates earlier recording by over two months.



War Stamps with Type I cancel: Slave Island April 14, 1920 to **California**. →

Stamps used to pay 6 cent foreign post card rate.

No War Tax on foreign mail.



Ceylon War Tax stamps were issued in 1918, these shown with Slave Island Type I cancels, the blocks also **precede the prior earliest known usage of the cancel** of March 19, 1919.



3 cent local to **Colombo, Fort**, location of the nearby base.
December 3, 1920. Rate lowered from the 4 cent war rate to 3 cents in 1920.

February 13, 1919 →





February 16, 1919

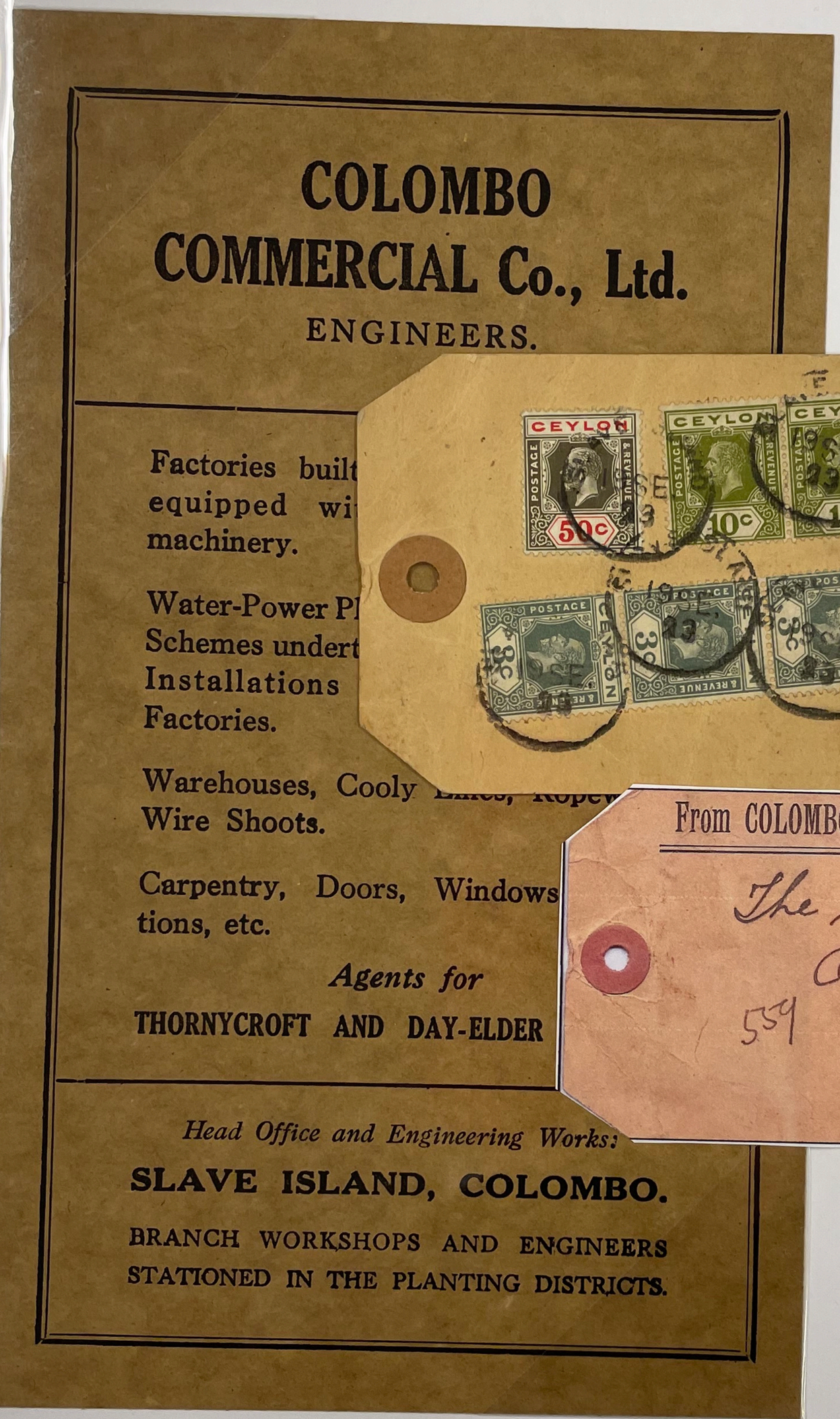
D. King George V Slave Island

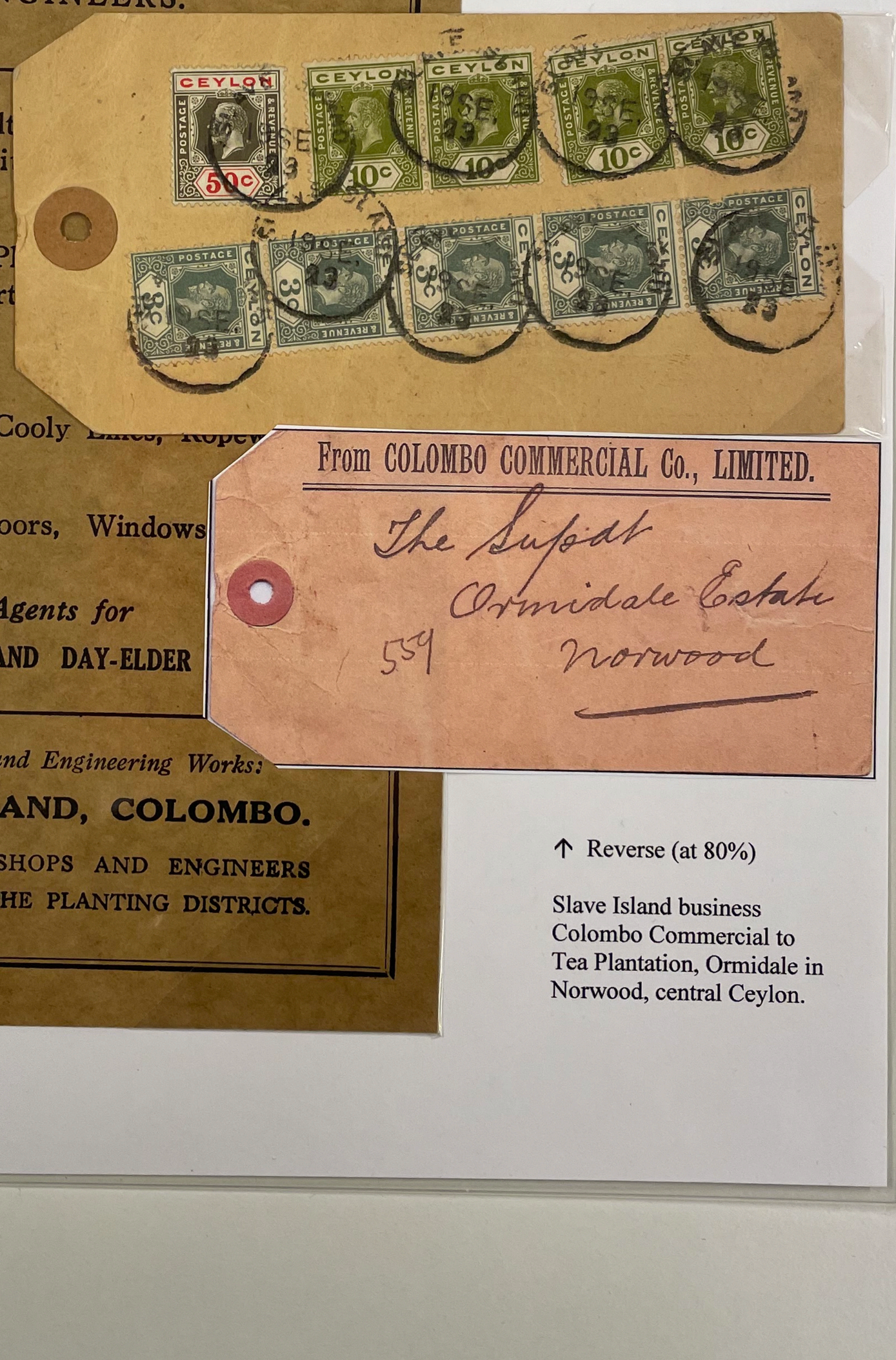
Domestic Mail

Parcel tag Slave Island.
Nine Type I cancels,
September 19, 1923.

Rated 1 Rupee 5 cents, rated for under 20 pounds.

Parcel tags from Slave Island seldom seen.

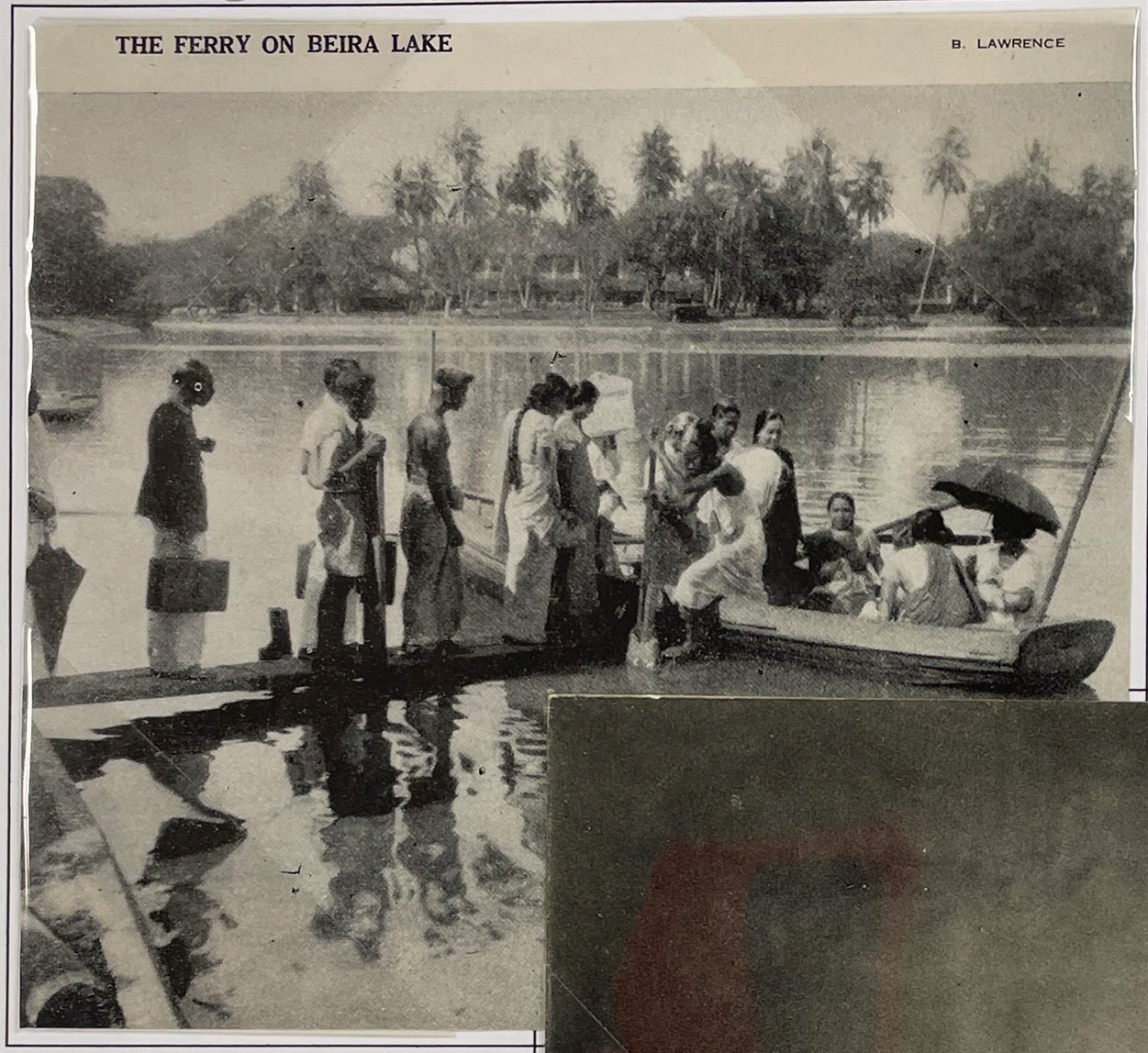




↑ Reverse (at 80%)

Slave Island business Colombo Commercial to Tea Plantation, Ormidale in Norwood, central Ceylon.

D. King George V Slave Island Activities on Tourist Mail



Recreation at Slave Island:
Lake Beira surrounds Slave Island.

Shown: tourists lined up for a ferry ride.





↑ "Skeen-Photo" postcard 6 cents Slave Island to **San Francisco, California.**

Postcard sent from a woman to female friend.

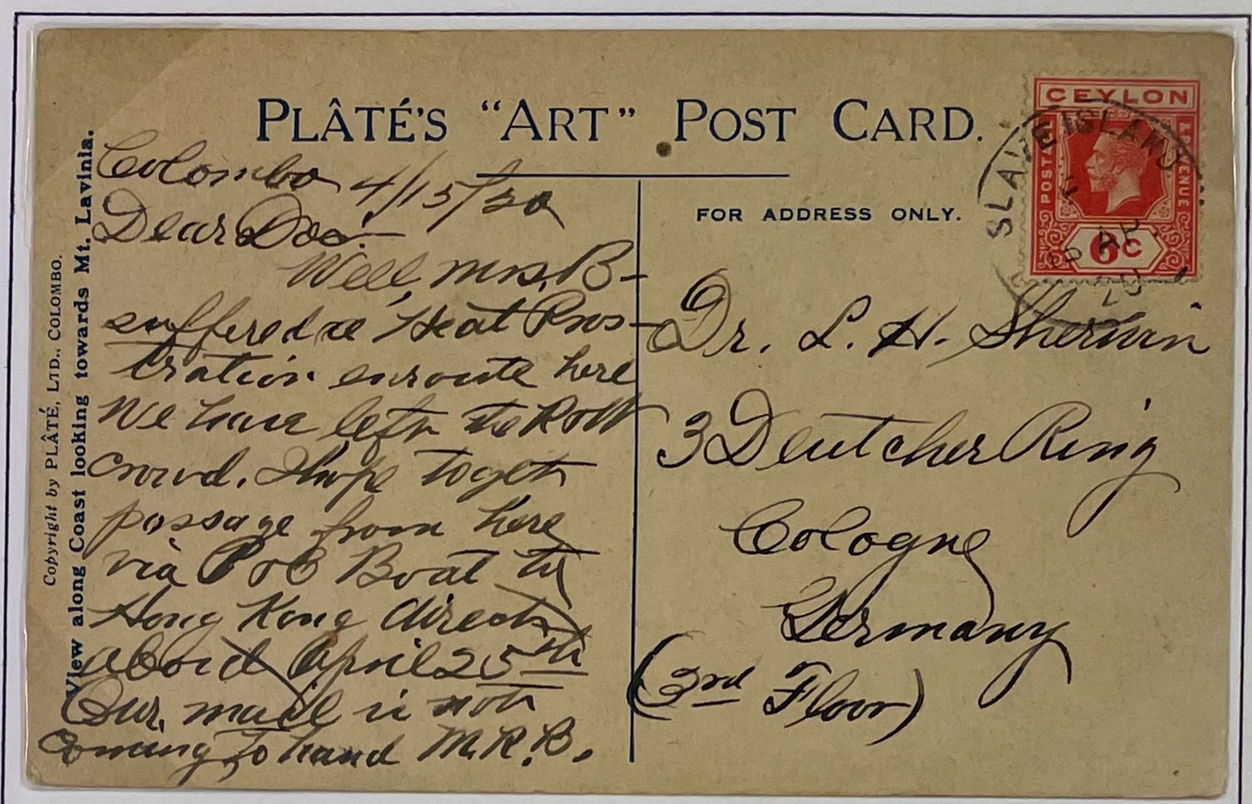
← 6 cent Type I on March 15, 1921 to **Riverside, California**.

D. King George V Slave Island

Tourist Mail to Europe

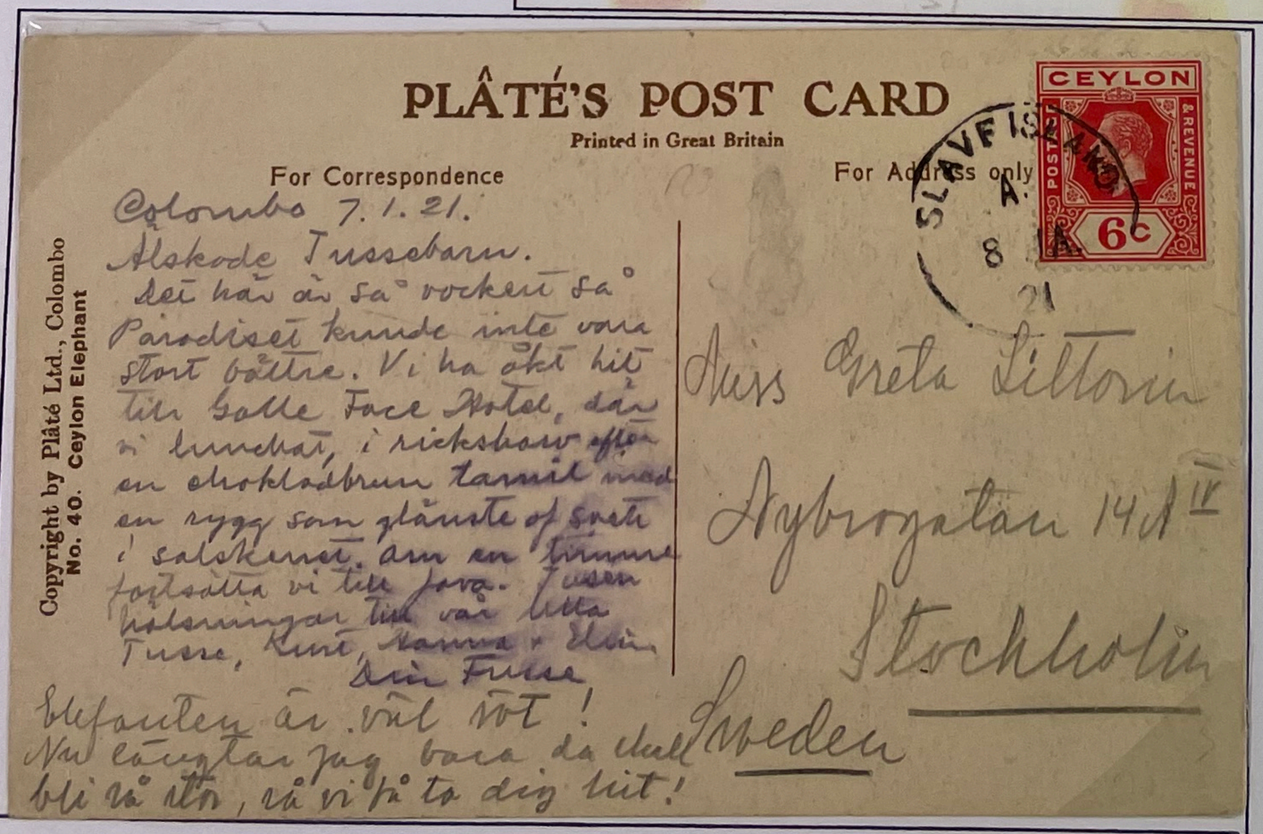
Cards using the 6 cent rate. This rate ended when the 1921 Empire rate of 12 cents went into effect.

6 cent Type I on April 5, 1920 to Cologne, **Germany**





"Roundabout at Slave Island. Colombo, Ceylon" photo, and showing caption on reverse.

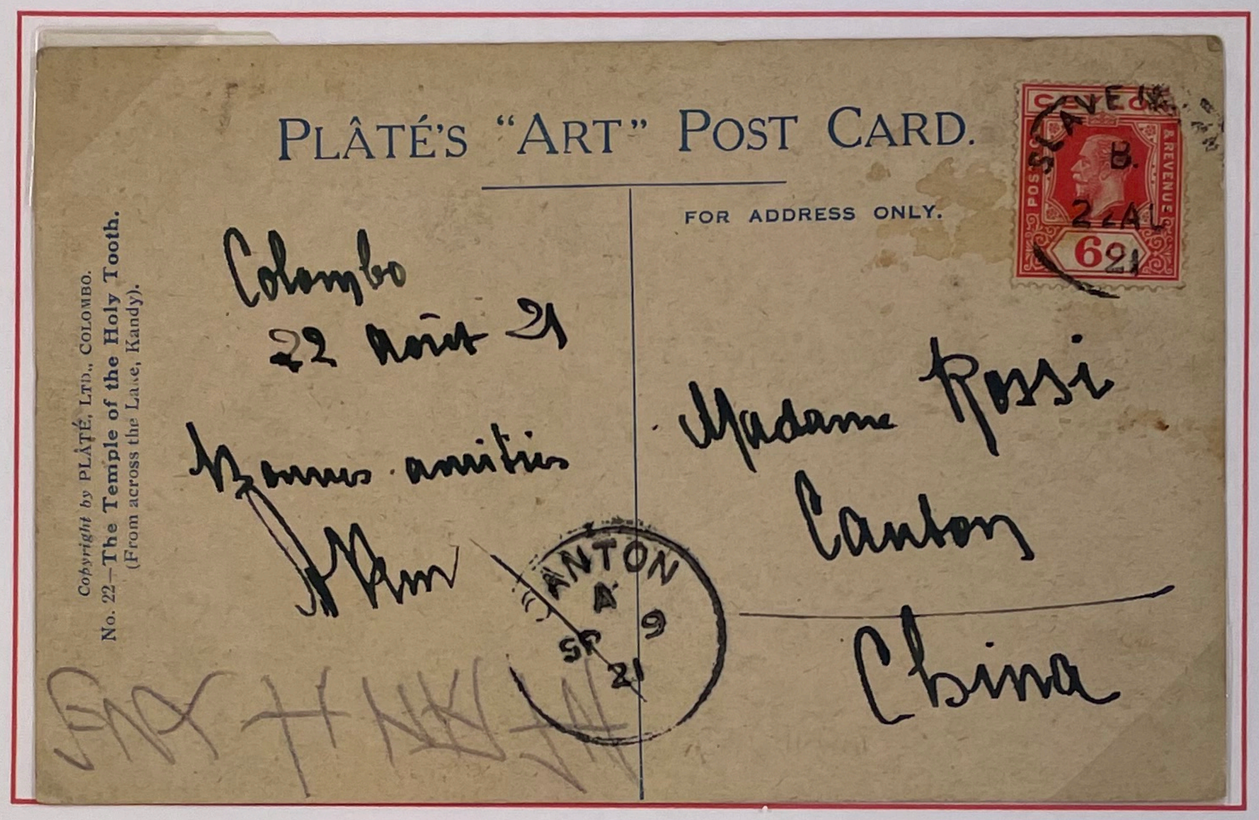


← 6 cent Type I January 8, 1921 to Stockholm, **Sweden**

D. King George V Slave Island

Foreign Mail

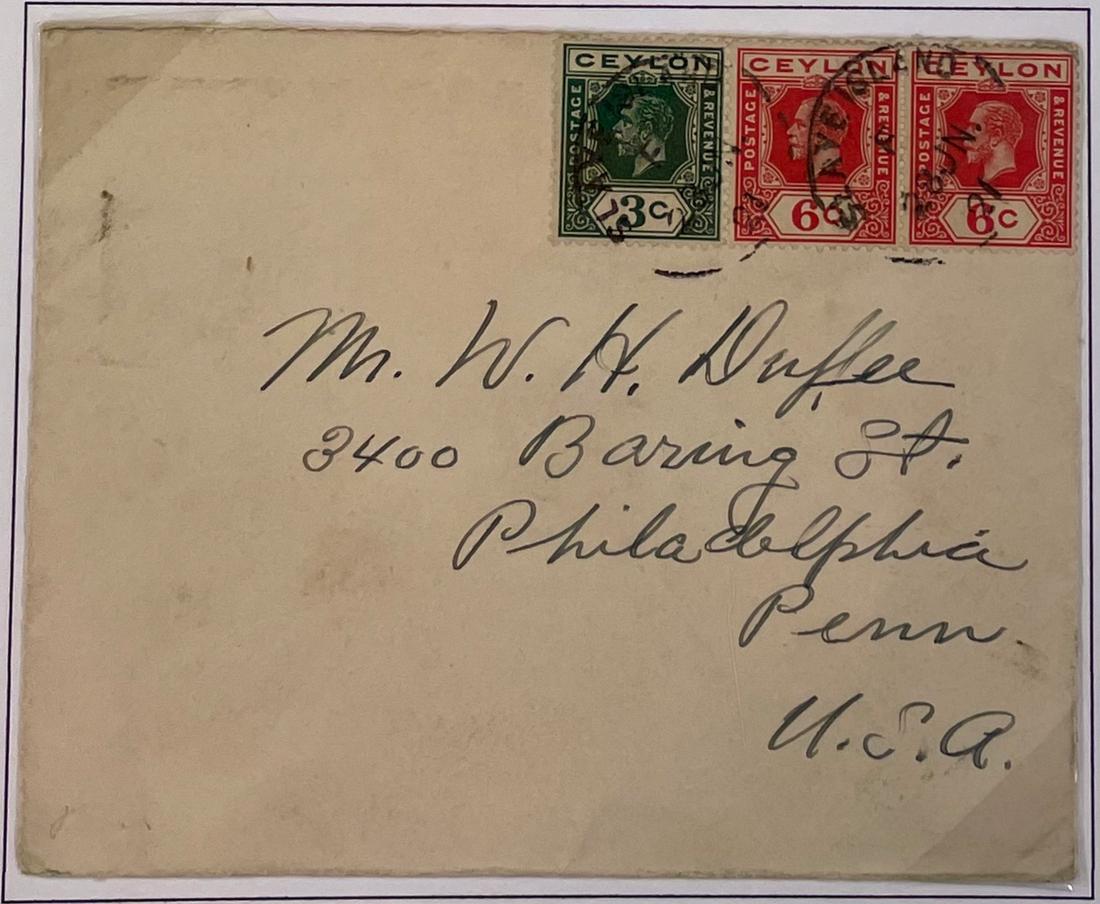
Until late in 1921 the rates to foreign destinations were 6 cent for postcards and 15 cents for letters. These were cancelled with the Type I postmarks.



6 cent foreign post card August 22, 1921 to Canton, **China**.

Late usage of rate.

Tourist mail to China seldom seen.



15 cent foreign rate with Type I postmark June 28, 1921 to **Philadelphia, PA**.

D. King George V Slave Island Tourist Mail: Rate Change

A revision in the postal rate in 1921 introduced Empire Mail as a new category, with the post card rate at **ten cents**.



12 cents with two Type I cancels, **overpaying** the 10 cent rate, December 20, 1921 to **England**.

A tourist would be much more likely to overpay a rate and not know rate changes.

"Lunch here at the Galle Face Hotel"

- location close to the Slave Island post office.



↑ The correct 10 cent Empire rate on Type I August 13, 1923.


Street Scene in Pettah, Colombo, Ceylon.

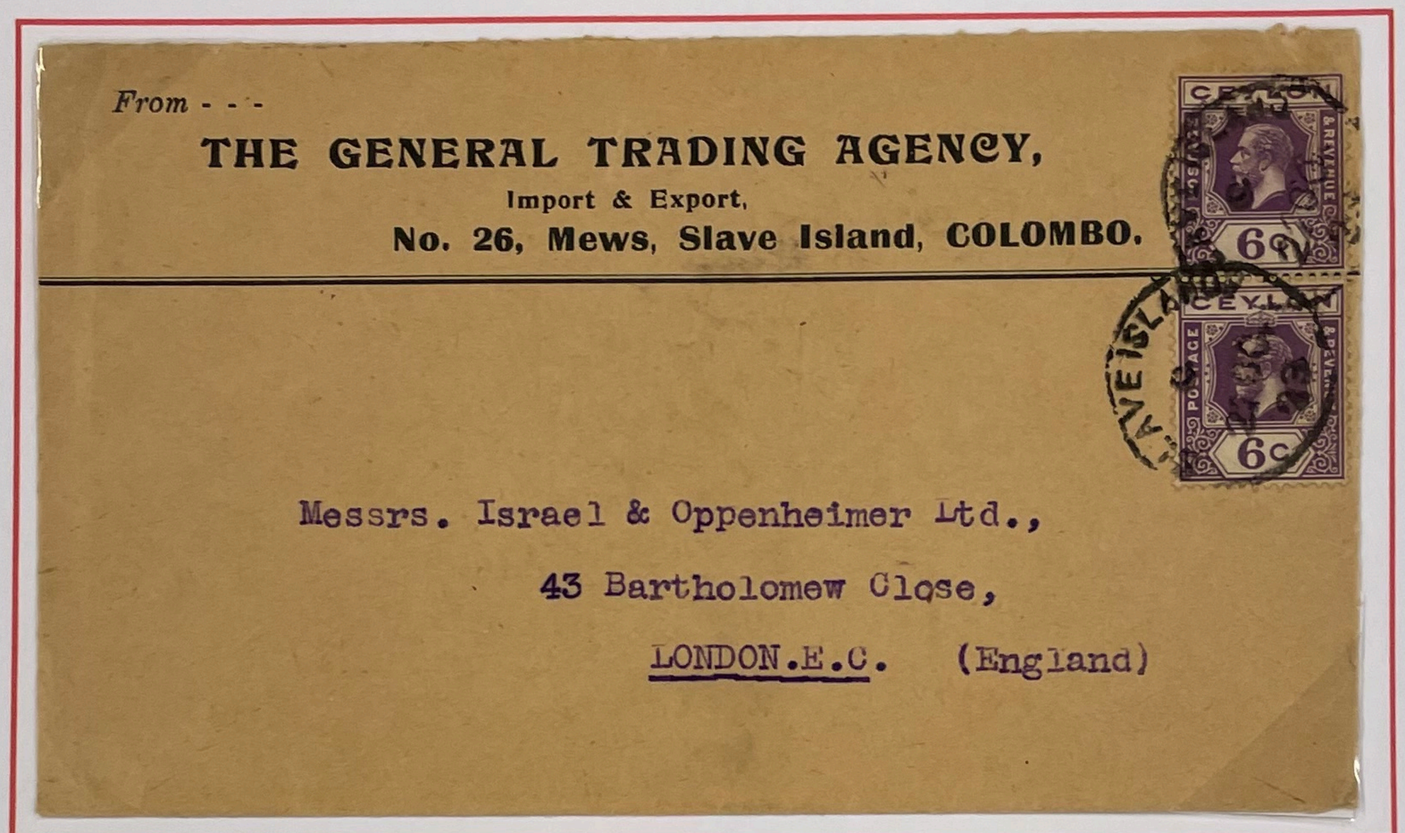
Typical tourist card of local shopping scene on textured Plâtè Card.

D. King George V Slave Island

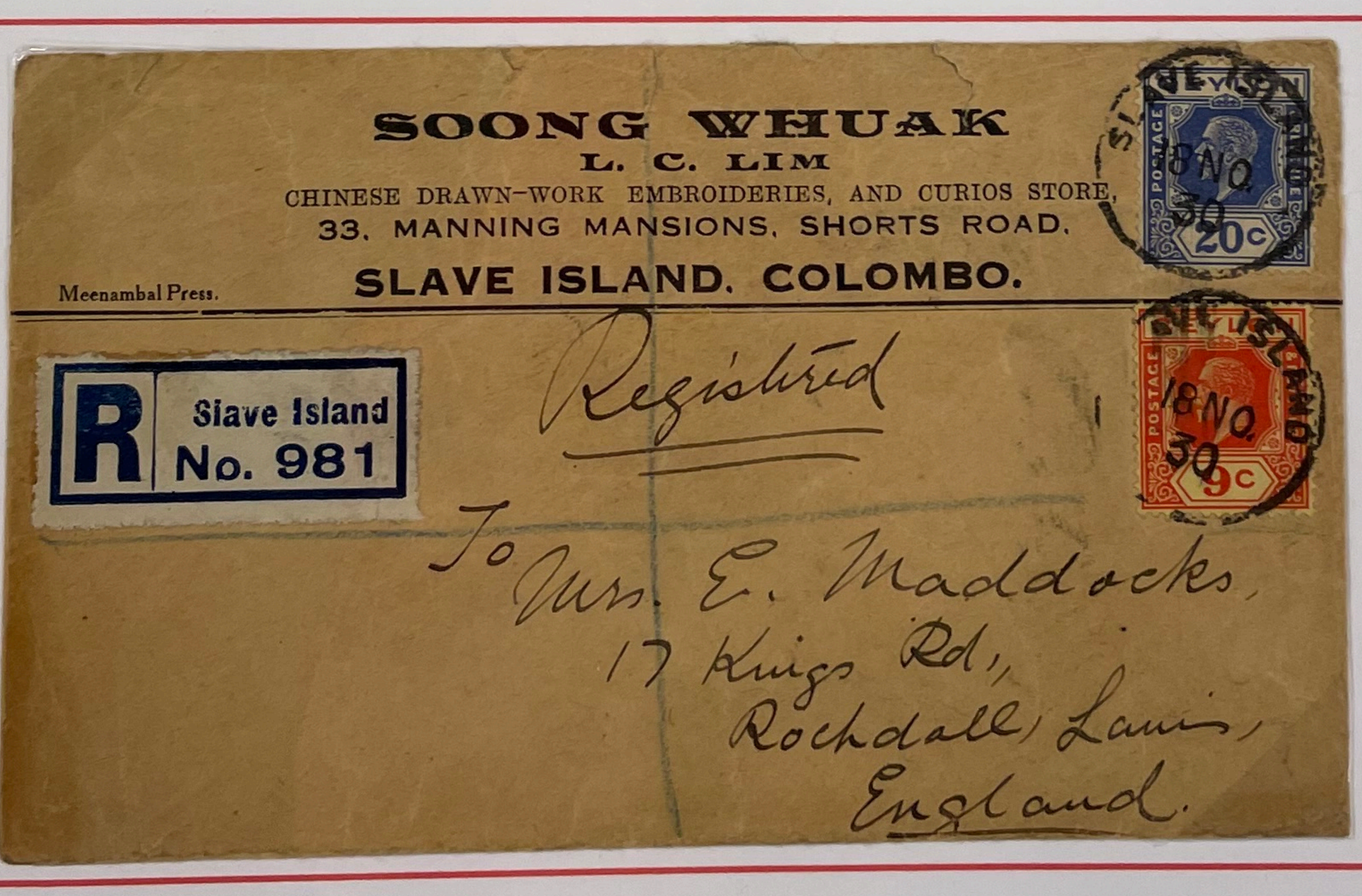
Commercial Mail

After a GPO mandate changed mail processing for Slave Island, Slave Island mail was processed and cancelled at the Colombo GPO and the Slave Island cancel was reserved for mail presented at the post office window only. Finding Commercial mail cancelled Slave Island suggests this mail was personally aken from the office to the post office for processing.

Seldom seen commercial covers from Slave Island



12 cent Empire Rate with two Type I postmark October 27, 1923 to London, **England**.

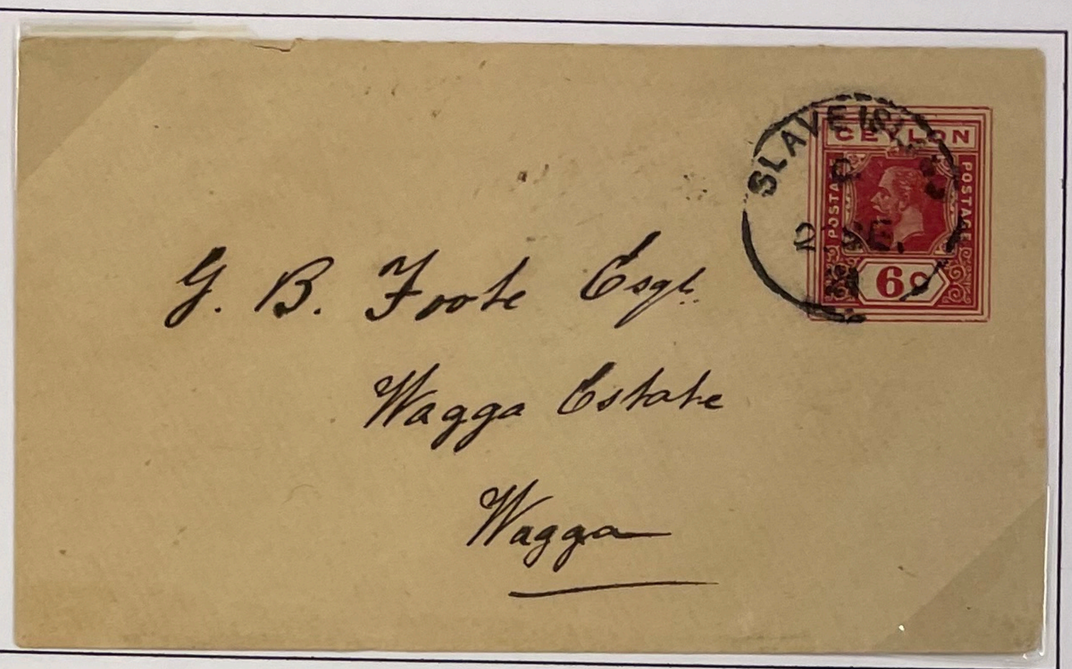


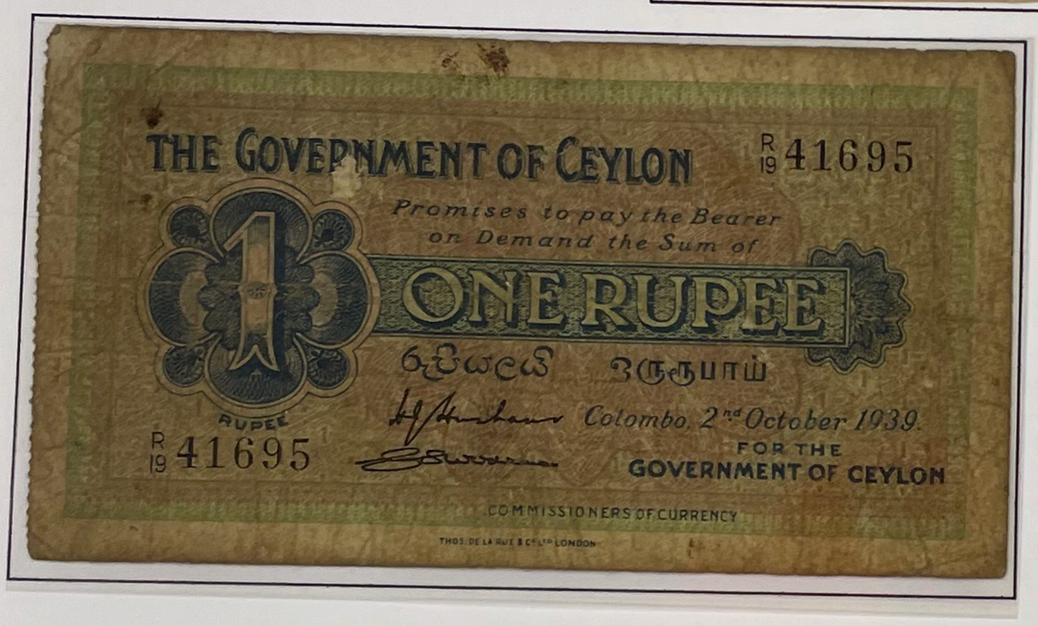
12 cent Empire Rate with Registration, Type I postmark to **England**.

D. King George V Slave Island Domestic & Foreign Mail

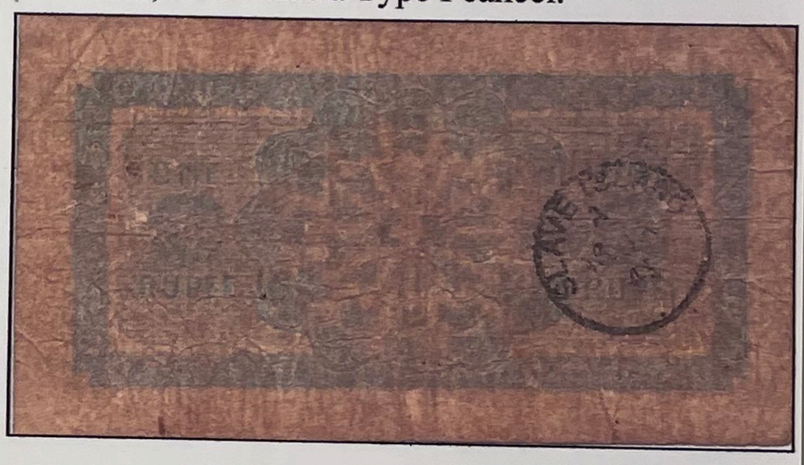
6 cent definitive Government Printing Office envelope with Type I cancel, local mail September 23, 1921.

To "Wagga", receiving marking reverse "Waga" next day, 30 miles.





← Government of Ceylon 1 Rupee note, on reverse a Type I cancel.

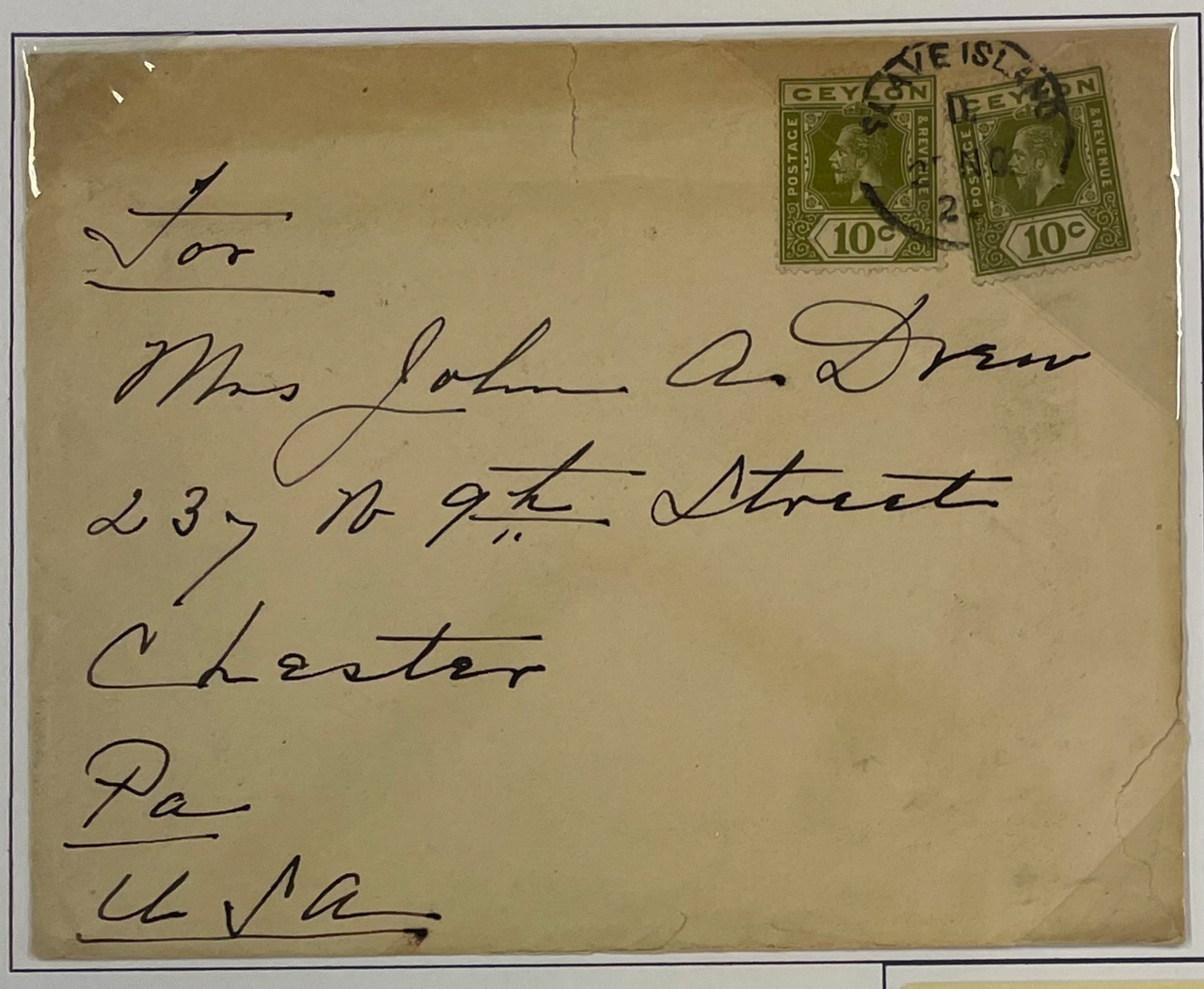


Reverse at 80%

12 cent foreign post card rate with Type I postmark December 26, 1921.

D. King George V Slave Island

Foreign Hotel Mail



← 20 cent Type I cancel November 27, 1921 to **Chester, PA**.

Rate change: 1921 rate change to the Empire Rate.



On Reverse: Stationery from the Galle Face Hotel.



Souvenir Spoon: Popular Tourist item of the times.

Original Art Deco style → **Luggage Tag** from the famous Galle Face Hotel.

The hotel is still in operation today.



D. King George V Slave Island

Foreign Tourist Mail



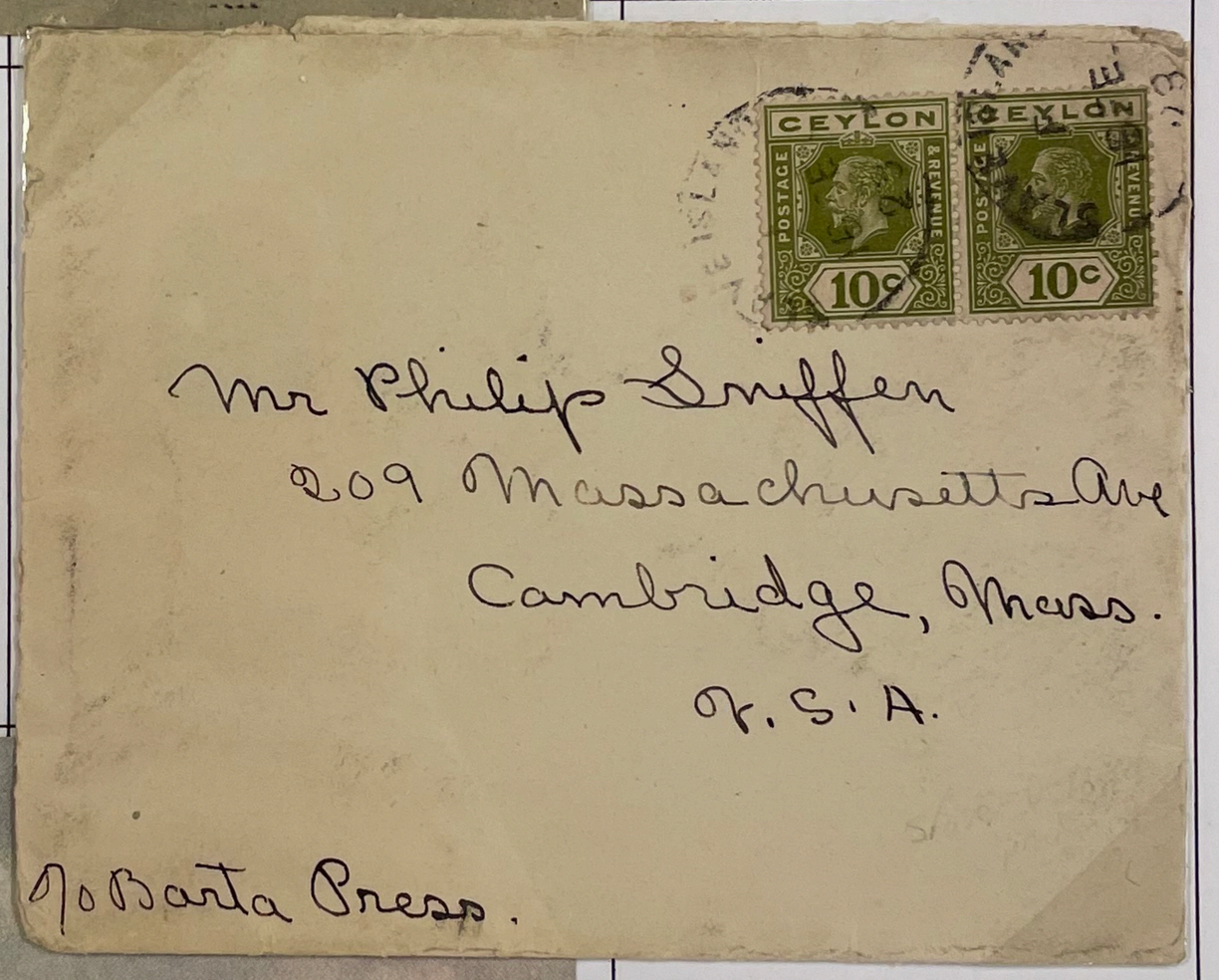
← On Reverse two 6c cent with Type I on March 22, 1923 to **Surry, England**.

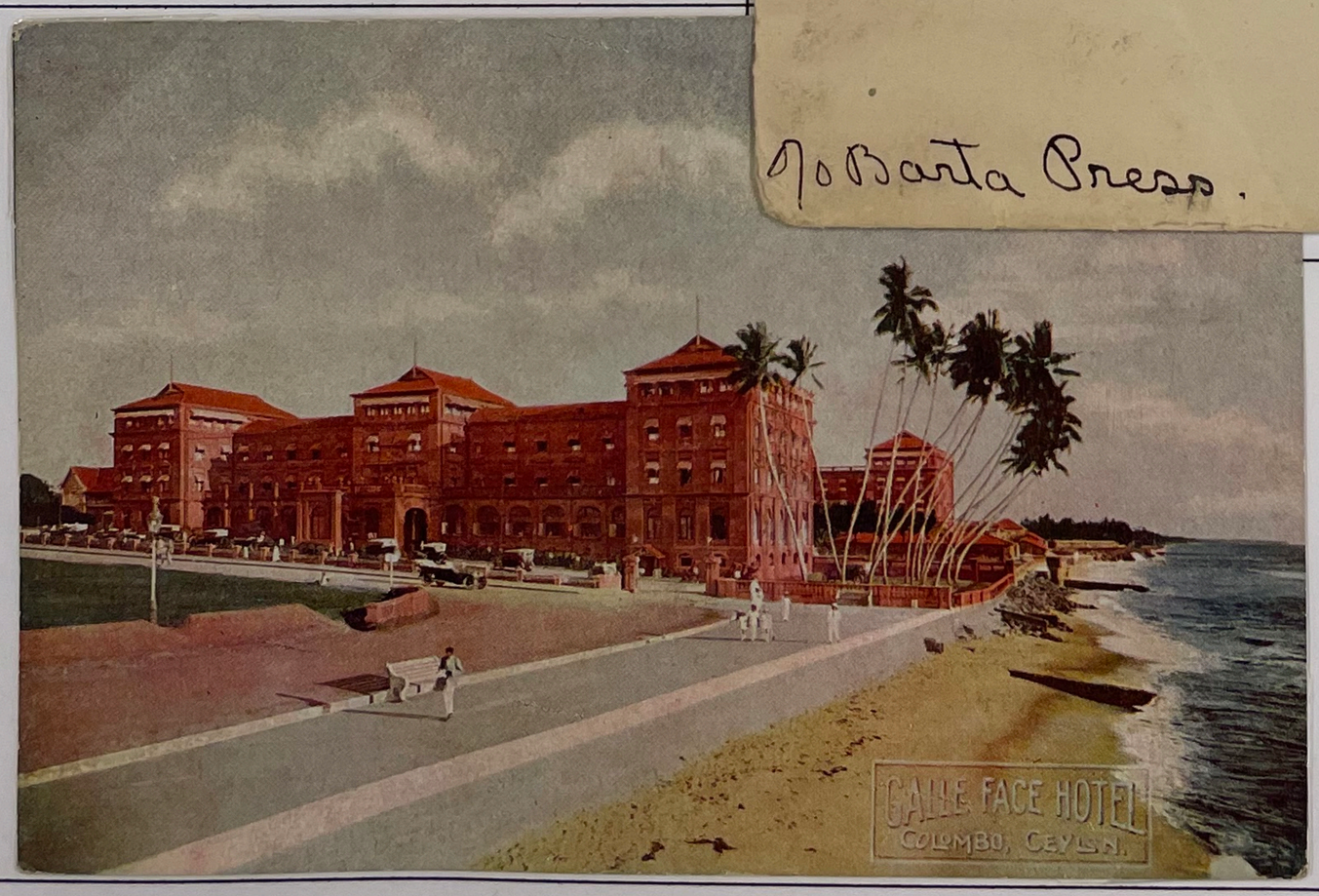
Plate split back Post Card, printed in Great Britain.

20 cent rate Two Type I cancels on → February 23, 1923 to **Cambridge, MA**.



Envelope Reverse



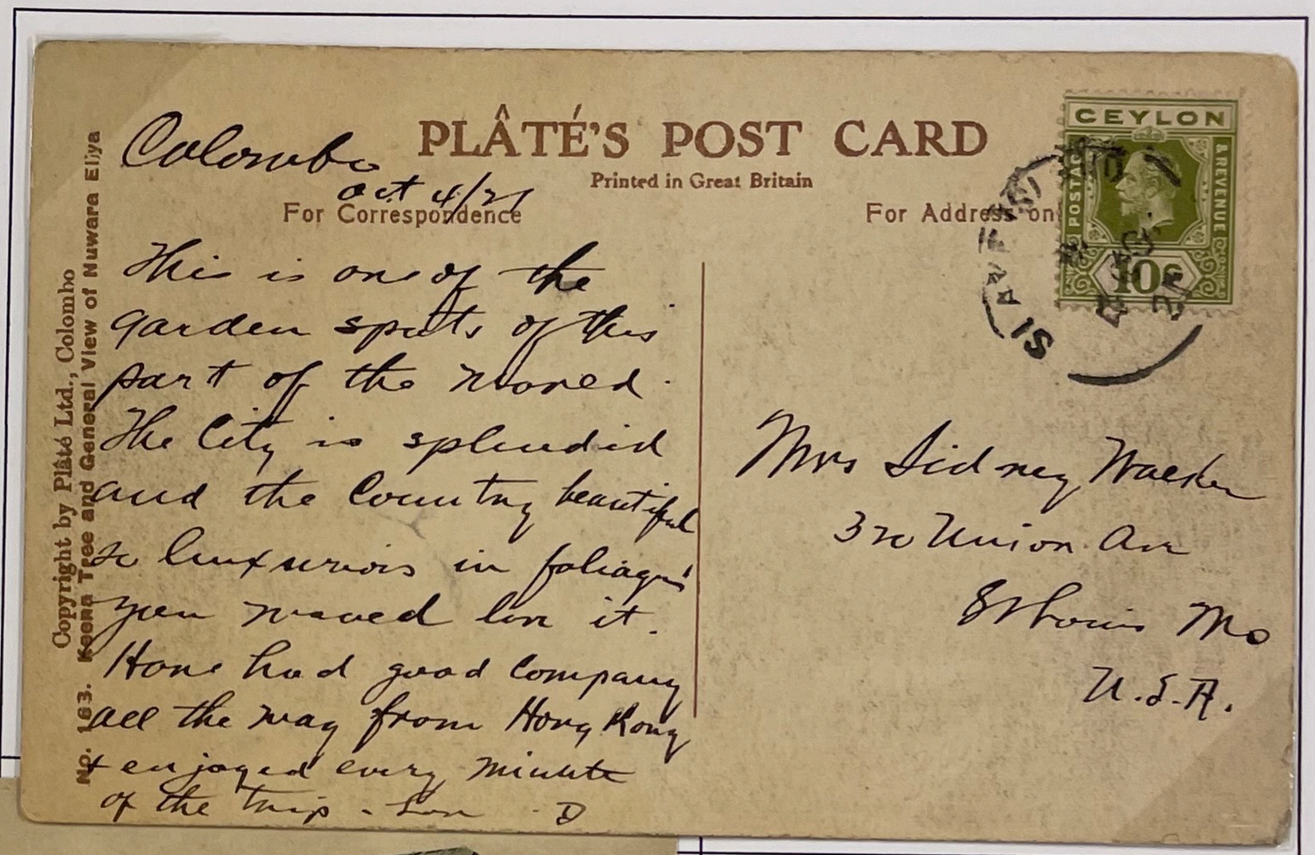


Galle Face Hotel split back postcard engraved and printed in Colombo, Ceylon by H.W. Cave & Company.

D. King George V Slave Island Tourist Mail to the US

"The city is splendid and the country is beautiful so luxurious in foliages"

10 cents **underpaying** the new → Empire rate. Type I cancel, October 4, 1921 to **St. Louis, Mo.**





12 cent with two Type I → cancels, August 16, 1922 to **Berkley, CA**.

"It's your old friend—on the other side of the world again"

12 cent with Type I cancel, July 20, 1922 to **Vineyard Haven, MA.**

← "You would love the hats and baskets, made of lovely gay colored straw!"

- on Plâtè Card, "Native Shops"



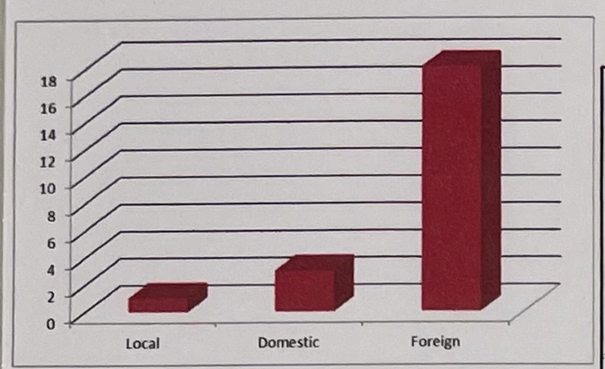
"It's your old friend—on the other side of the world again"

D. King George V Slave Island

Tourist Mail Rates

Why so much tourist mail? Ceylon's **tea industry** and growing prosperity brought increased awareness of the island. Ceylon's had become a popular cruise and vacation holiday stop. Local residential areas turned to commercial.

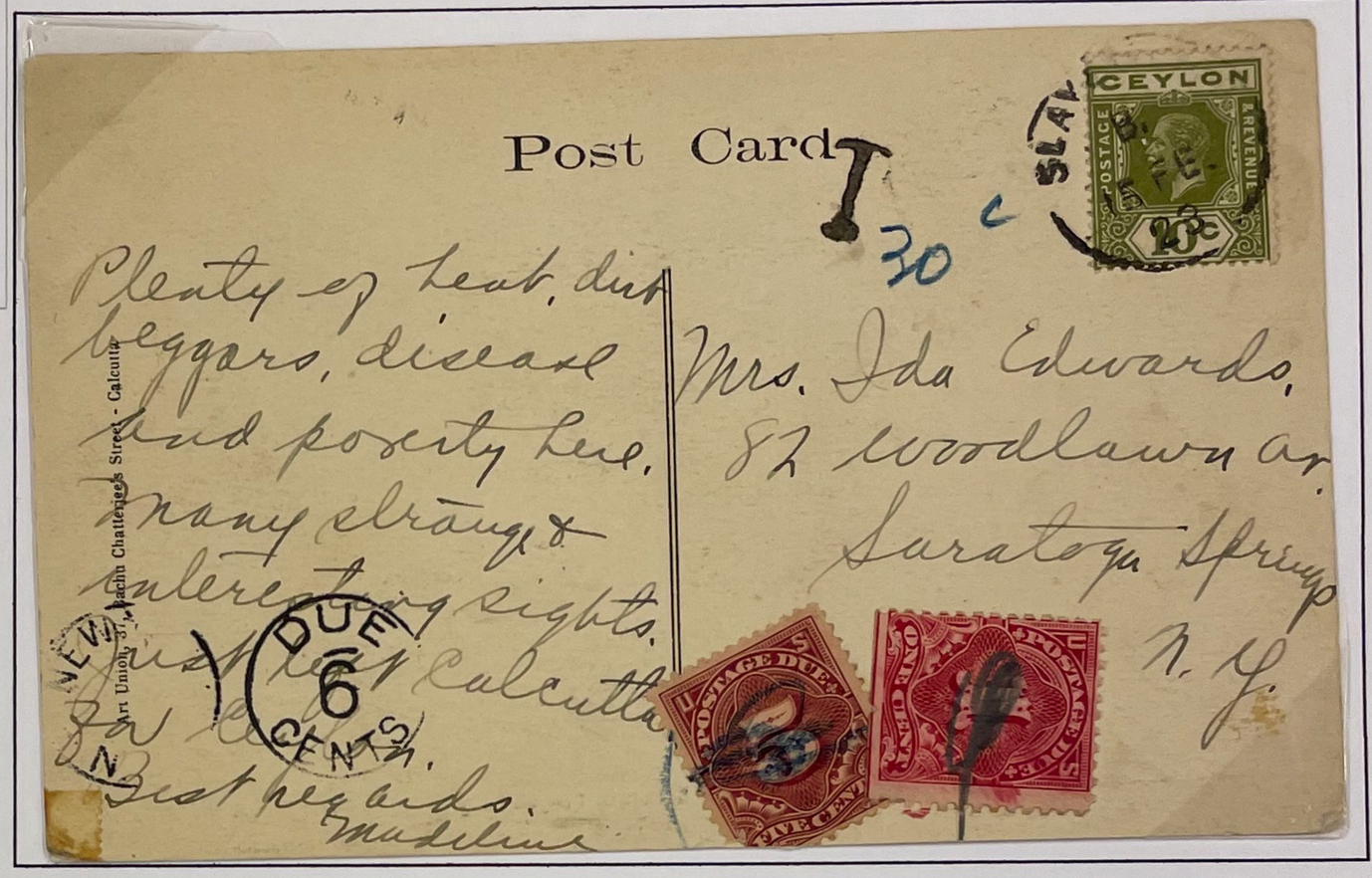
Mail Census George V Mail



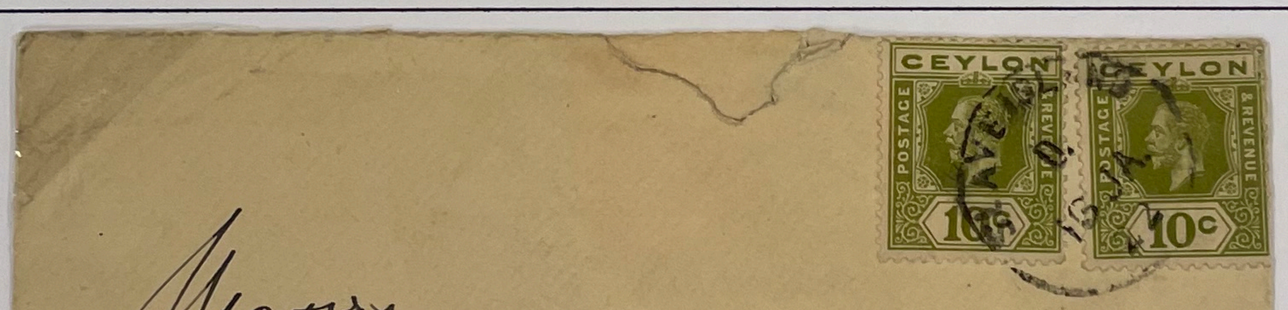
Mail shifts away from largely domestic in early years. Most mail at Slave Island—tourist.

This tourist not so impressed:

"Plenty of heat, dust, beggars, disease and poverty here."



10 cents paid. Marked "30c" for 30 centimes due and assessed "Due 6 cents" on US conversion. Sent February 15, 1923 to Saratoga Springs, NY.



20 cent Empire Rate Type I postmark January 16, 1922 to **New York, NY**.



Envelope Reverse
Posted in Slave Island on a stop from a cruise line.

E. King George VI Slave Island

Foreign Mail

A new cancellation came into use at the time of the Silver Jubilee. King George V died within a year of the Jubilee issues. The new cancel increases the font size of "Slave Island" and date stamp characters, which are centered on the marking.



Type I:
March 13, 1934
to April 3, 1947
25 mm



↑ 40 cents to Germany
August 5, 1935. Rate: 15 cent letter, and 25 cent Registration. Forwarded.



↑ Slave Island Commercial
November 20, 1940
Rate: 6 cents to India.

Franking with set new King George VI commemoratives, and triangular censored markings and tape. May 2, 1940. Rate: 6 cents to India, 15 cents Registration.

E. King George VI Slave Island Foreign Wartime Mail

Ceylon played an important role in WWII, military outposts in Colombo served troops, and Red Cross operations under A. Baur & Co. Ltd provided service war P.O.W.s. Mail from the Red Cross was processed through the Slave Island post.

The Type I cancel, first introduced in 1934, was used on the KGVI stamps until the late 1940s. George VI stamps were issued replacing the earlier King's portrait.

Red Cross—Service to Prisoners of War

Geneva Delegation, Ceylon Red Cross



As Seal on Reverse

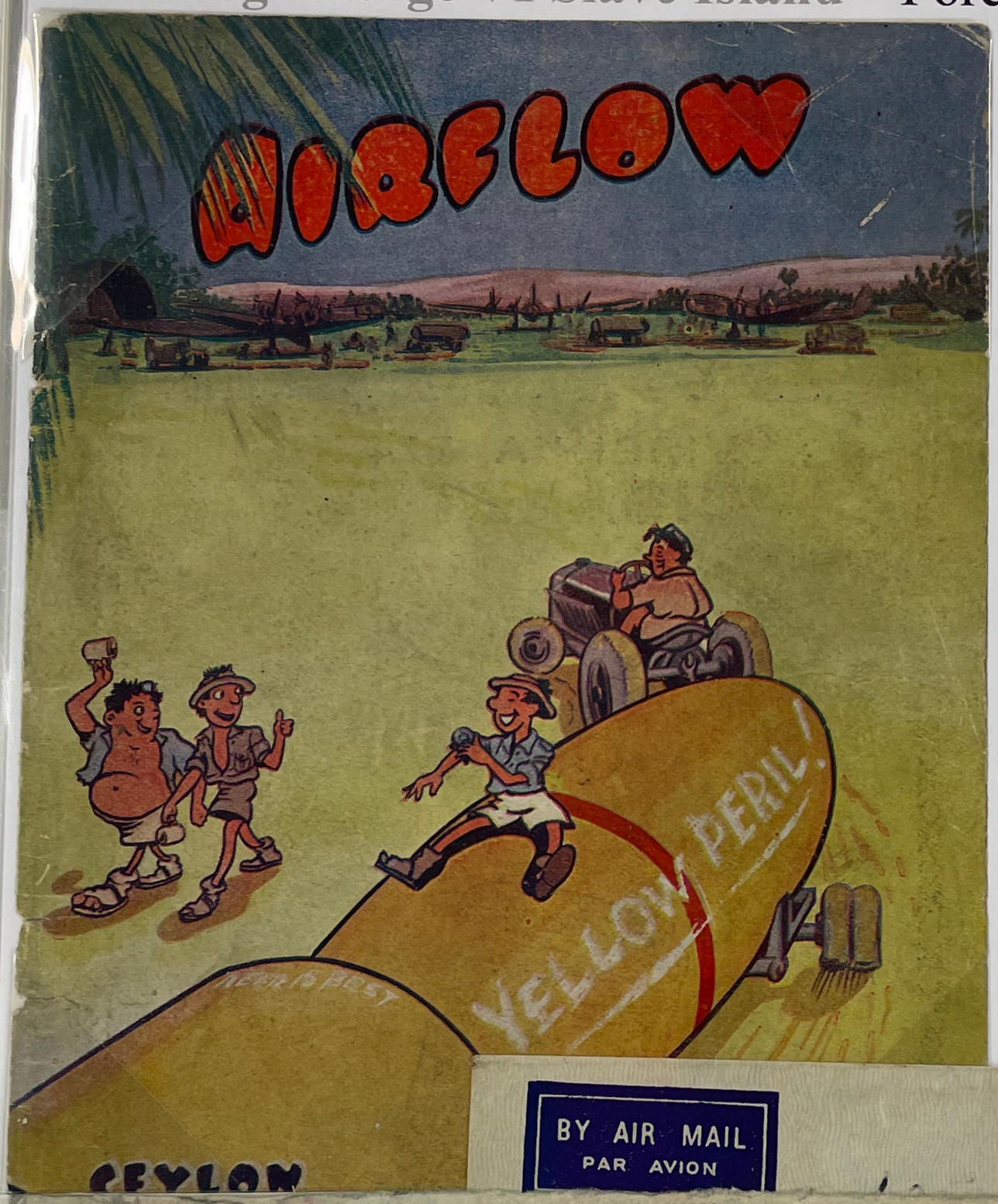




1 Rupee empire rate Airmail. November 3, 1945, **London** Type I postmark. Limited Red Cross mail known from Ceylon.

←2 Rs 60 Airmail to US. August 1, 1946.

E. King George VI Slave Island Foreign Wartime Mail



British RAF operated from bases in Colombo (including Slave Island) and Trincomalee, Ceylon.

The "Base P.O. Ceylon" cancel was used by forces mail instead of civilian processing through the **Slave Island** or Colombo G.P.O.

← Available from the base Post Office:

Airflow. The RAF magazine of Ceylon published monthly starting in 1939.

Inside: "Published by Servicemen for Servicemen."

Below: 50 cent military rate Airmail RAF censor cover to England.

Letter processed & cancelled at "Base P.O. Ceylon"

Military installations were operating on Slave Island.



←1 Rs 50 Airmail to New York. Censored, December 6, 1941.

E. King George VI Slave Island Foreign Wartime Mail

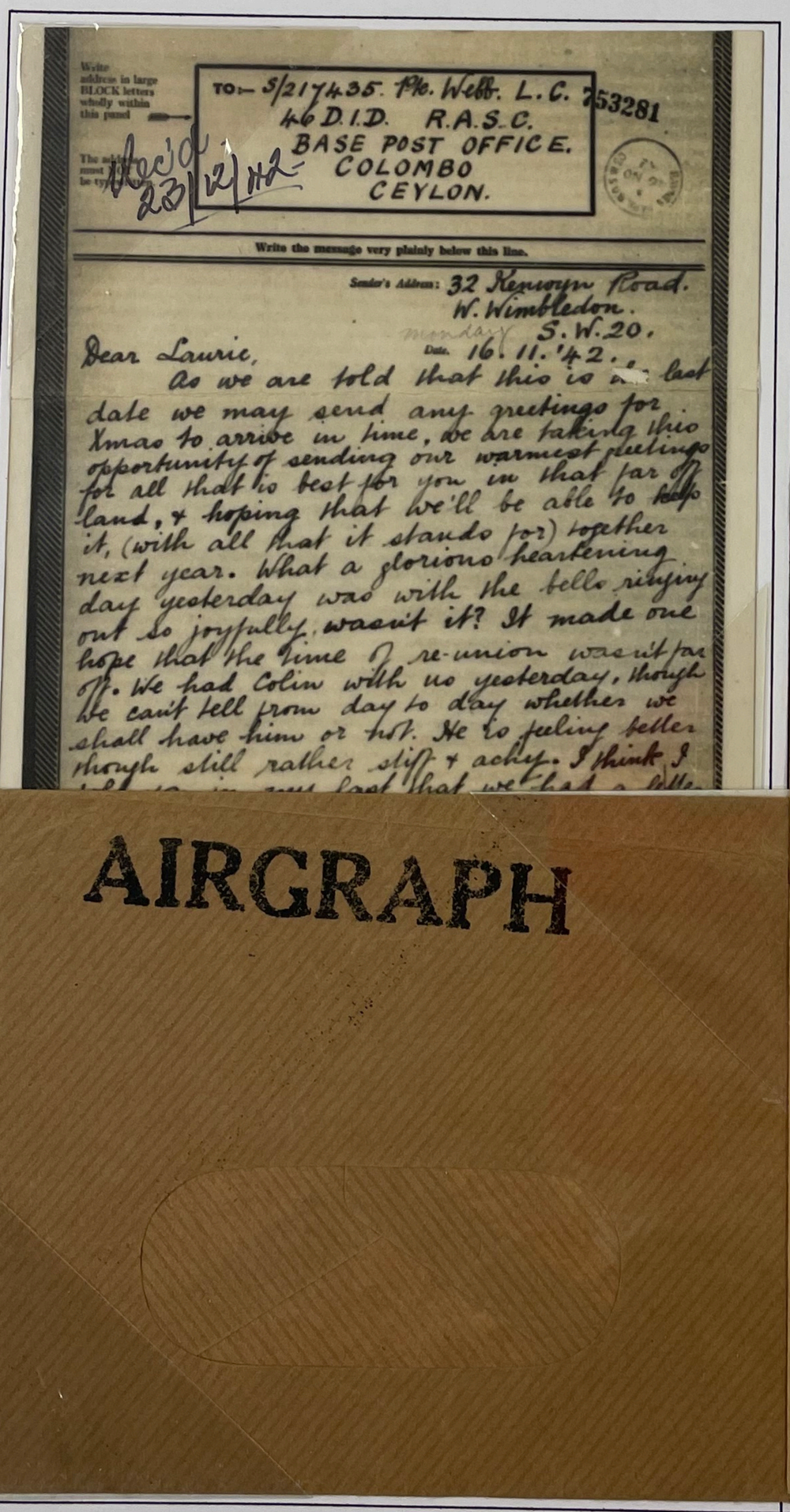
During World War II, wartime military bases operated on Slave Island and in Colombo, fighting back Japanese attacks beginning in April, 1942.

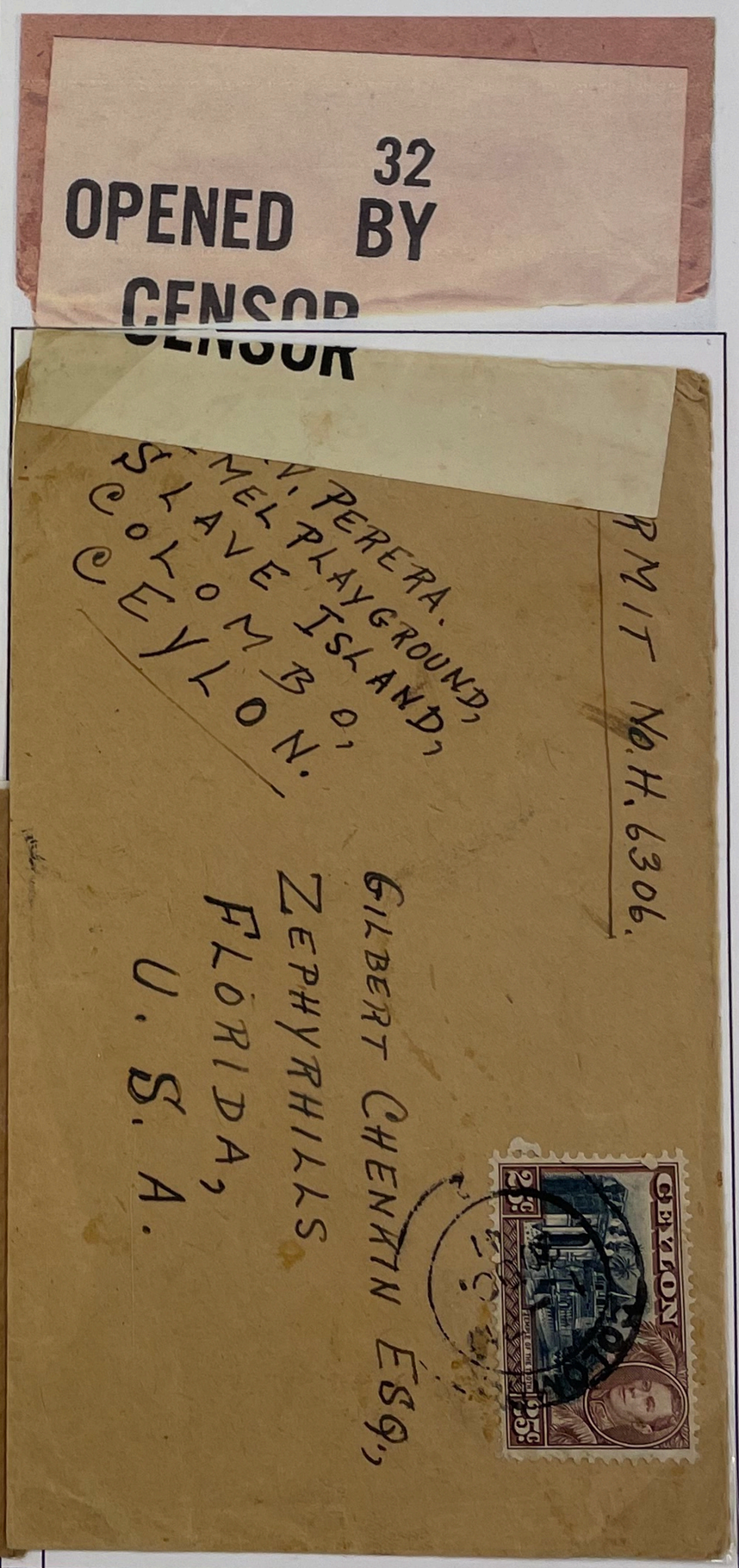
↓ 25cent to **Florida, USA** October 30, 1941

↓ British WWII Microfilmed Correspondence: Airgraph To Royal Army Service Corp, November 16, 1942. Marked received December 23, 1942.

Slave Island return address War censored and postmarked at GPO.

Full size scan of censor label on reverse.





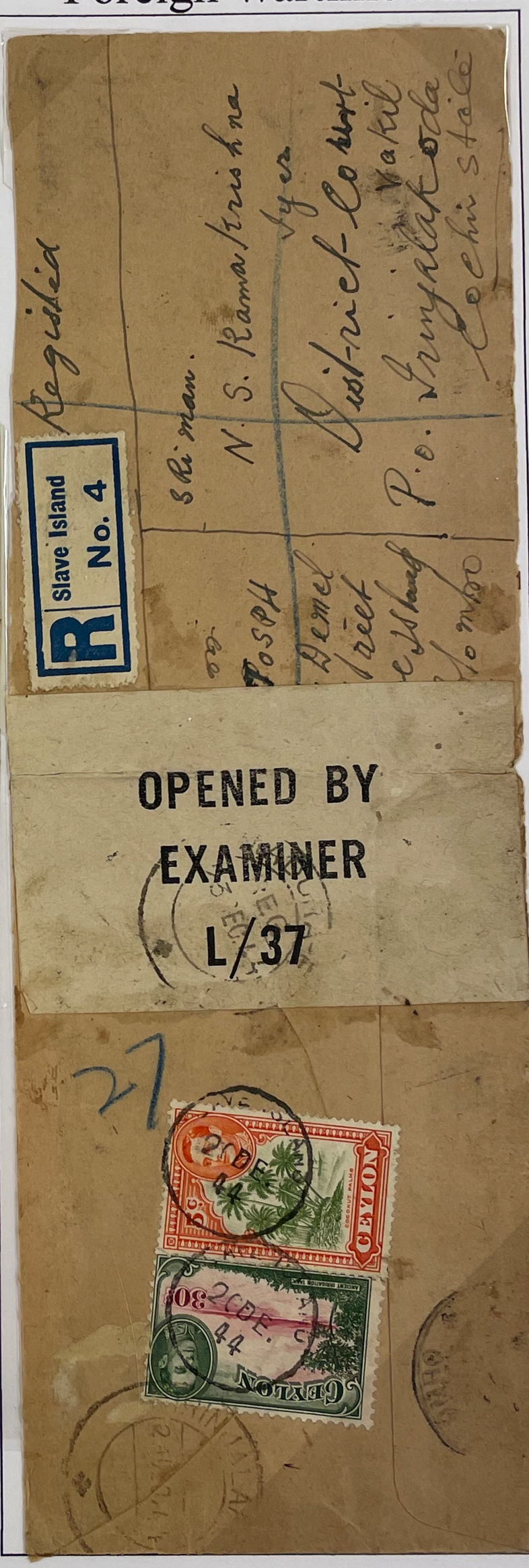
E. King George VI Slave Island

Foreign Wartime Mail

Why so much foreign mail? Ceylon enjoyed prosperity with tea exports, and had generated extensive foreign trade. During the war years, the composition of foreign mail changed. Increased military mail, and a decrease in tourist cards.

35 cent Registered to **India** → Sent December 20, 1944.
Opened by Examiner in India. Indian cog wheel cancel.

Two Slave Island Type VII cancels. Cover shown opened.



Colombo Map with Slave Island



Here is the map of Colombo which we were unable to publish last month.

It is reproduced by permission the Ceylon Survey Department and the block was kindly loaned by the Automobile Association of Ceylon.

From **Airflow**. The RAF magazine of Ceylon illustrated this map of Colombo for servicemen. Slave Island and Slave Island Post Office shown.

E. King George VI Slave Island

Foreign to India

35 cent Registered foreign letter to **India** with Type II cancel October 25, 1948.

Sender's Address:
"*4/11 Union Place*
Slave Island, Colombo 2"

Same street as hotel below.




"Carlton" Private Hotel,

UNION PLACE, SLAVE ISLAND, COLOMBO.

Is situated on its own grounds, and is in close proximity to the Cinnamon Gardens, The Museum, Victoria Park, Race Course and other places of interest in Colombo.

Most efficient Management.

Rooms—Clean, Cool and Comfortable. Electric Lights and Fans.

Cuisine—Excellent. **Attendance**—Perfect.

ADMIRABLY SUITED FOR BOARDERS, VISITORS, &c.
ALL HOME COMFORTS
LAWN TENNIS

TELEPHONE No. 465.

Carlton Private Hotel:
Address: *Union Place, Slave Island.*

Sender's caption:

"On the other is a poor picture of our hotel. It is a perfect paradise"

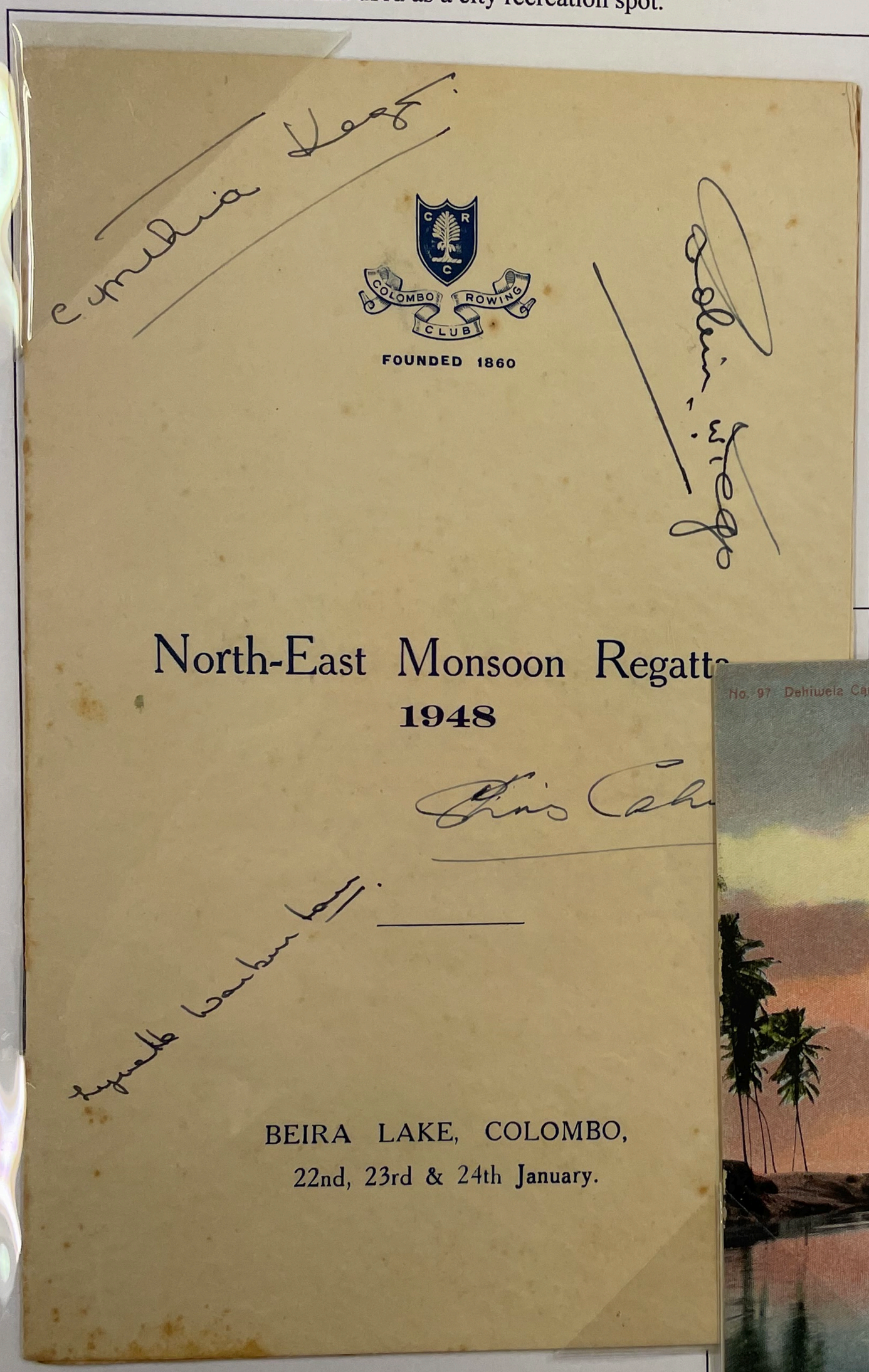
"The Carlton Hotel. Slave Island, Colombo"

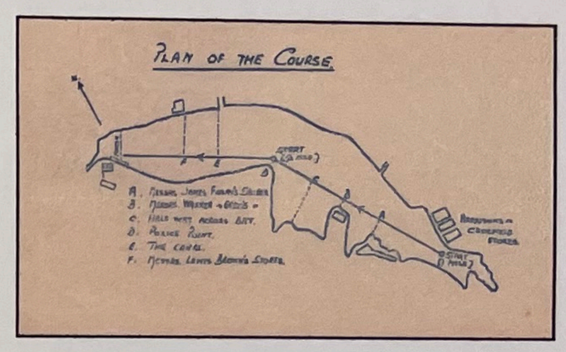
Private divided back RPPC for hotel guest use.



E. King George VI Slave Island Slave Island: Recreation

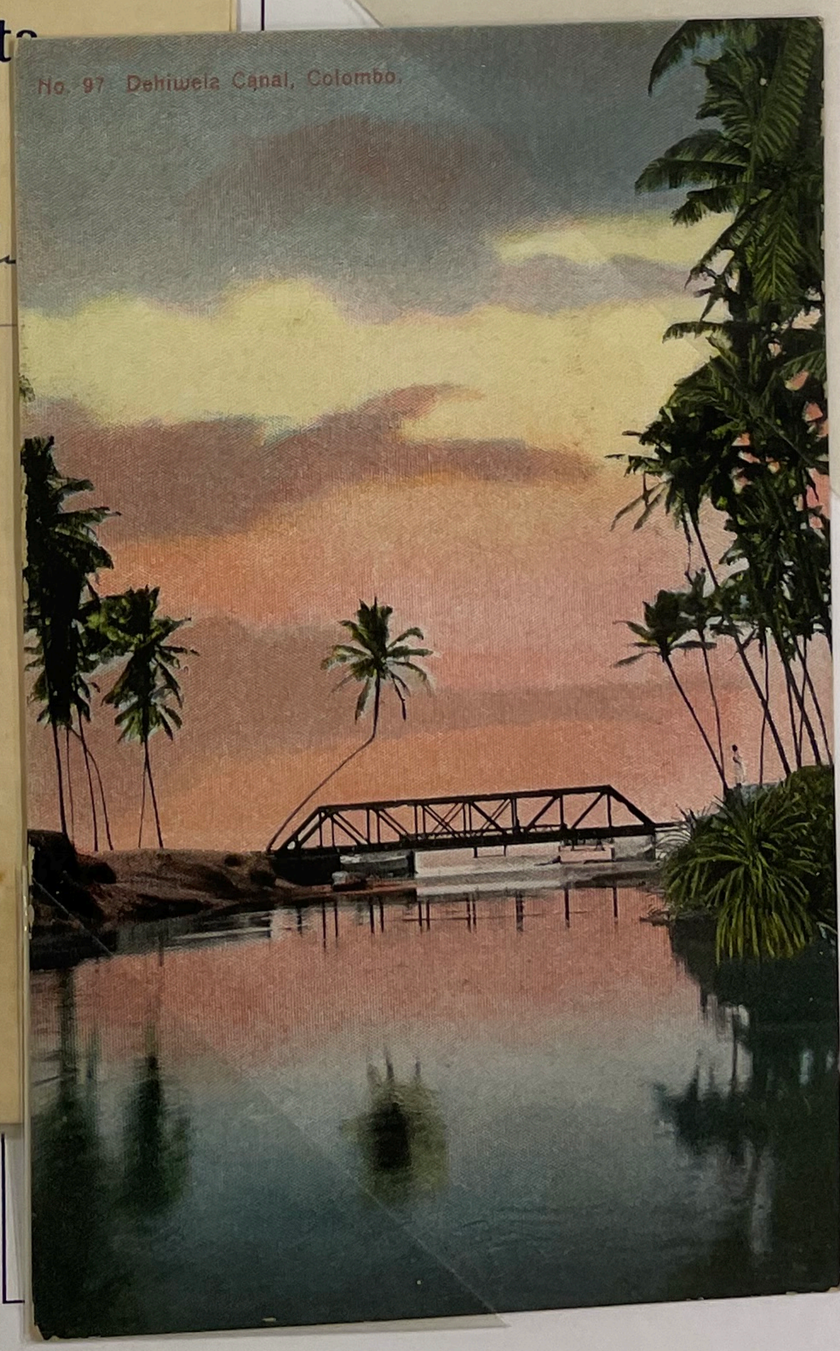
Slave Island was initially an island surrounded by Beira Lake, Colombo. Stocked with ***crocodiles in the slaving*** past, the Beira Lake was cleared and used as a city recreation spot.





Inside:
Plan of the Course, Beira Lake,
Slave Island.

← Full program, Monsoon Regatta



Colombo Apothecaries divided back UPU color lithographed card. Dehiwela Canal, bridge to **Slave Island**.→

E. King George VI Slave Island

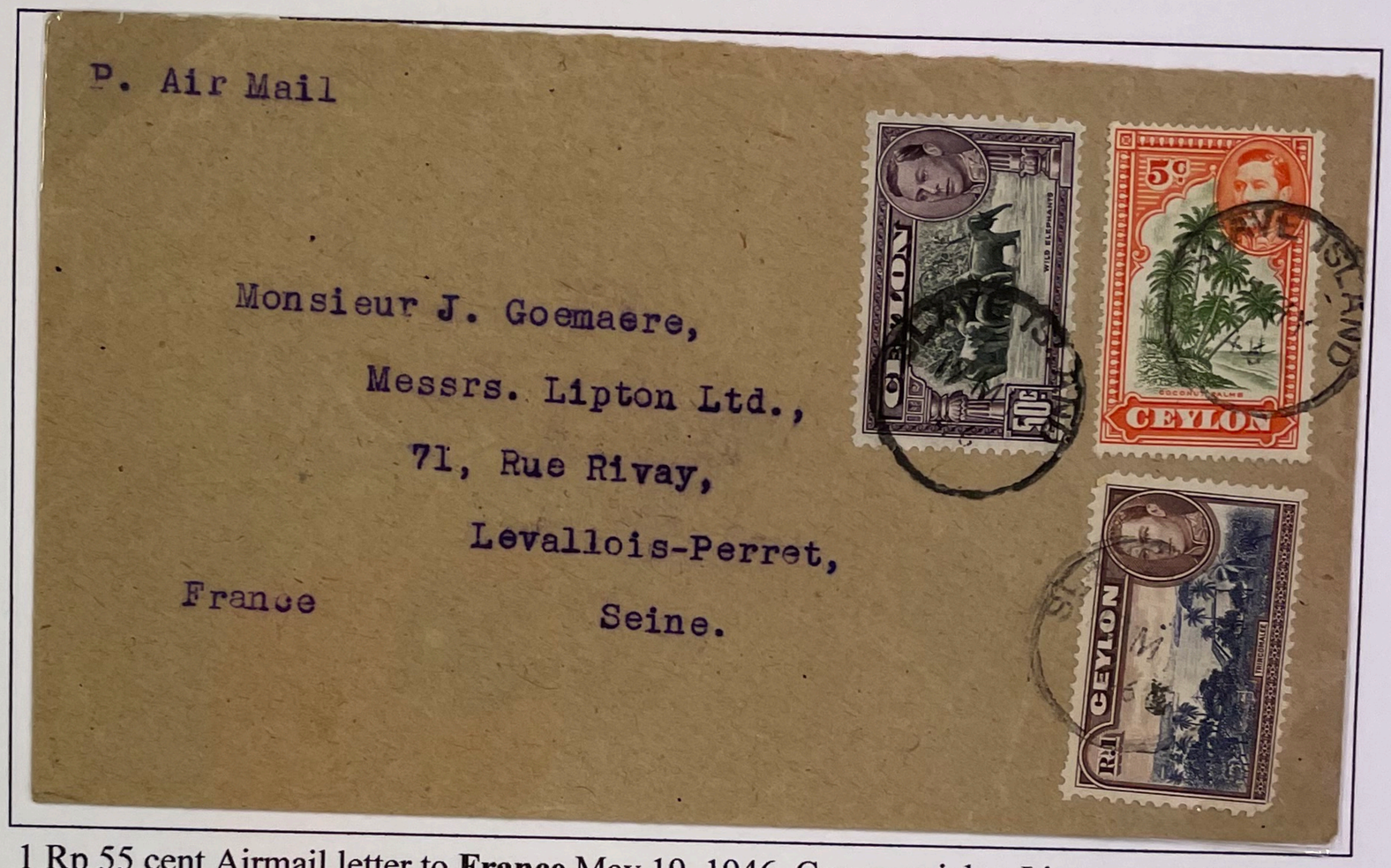
Foreign Commercial

New Type II Slave Island cancel with "Slave Island" text set closer and on the cancel ring, 25 mm size.

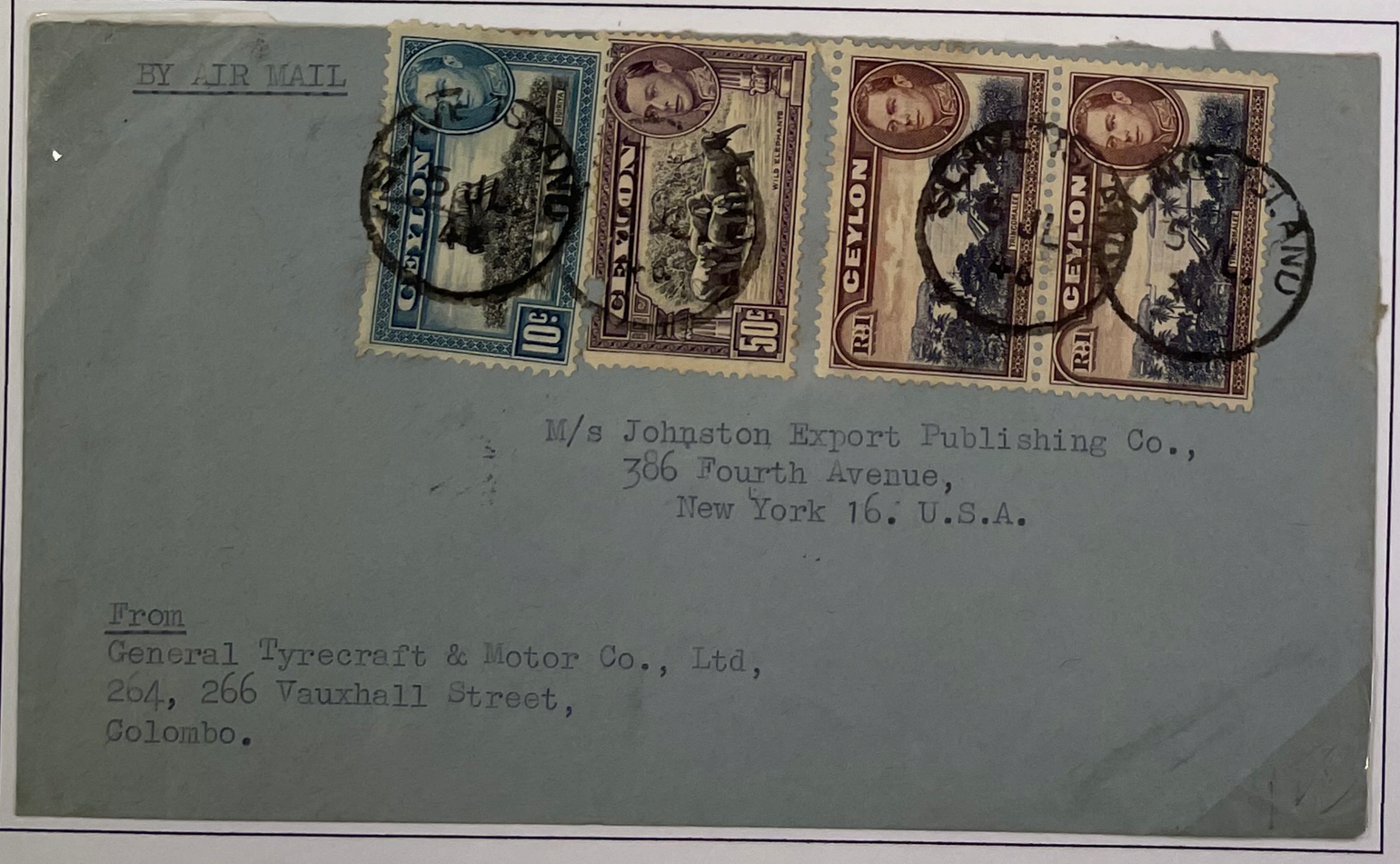
Policy Change – Mail Handling
Mail dropped off at the Slave Island post office would be taken to the parent Colombo GPO for processing and cancelling. **Only mail handled over at the postal counter would continue to receive the Slave Island cancel.**



Type II:
April 19, 1944
November 24, 1958
25 mm



1 Rp 55 cent Airmail letter to **France** May 19, 1946. Commercial to Lipton (tea) Ltd, special service, cancelled at counter with three Type II cancels.



2 Rp 60 cent Airmail letter to **New York** July 5, 1946.

E. King George VI Slave Island Foreign Registered Airmail

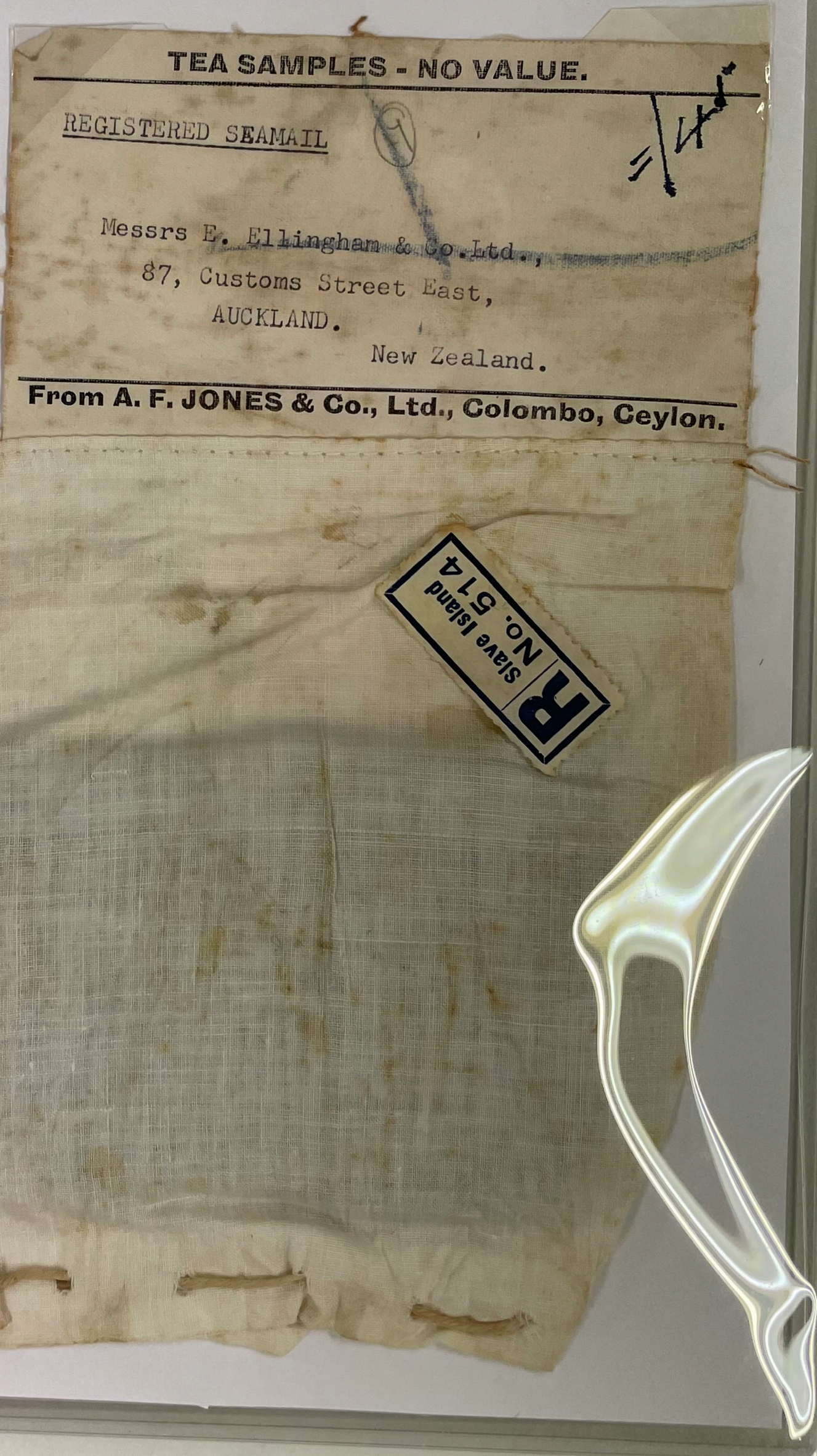
The Business of Tea: Tea has been Ceylon's number one export product for over 100 years by 1950. **Tea Samples—No Value** notation allowed for the discounted postal rate. Registered **"Slave Island"** provides the postal indication of the commercial business still conducted at the Slave Island post office.



Reverse franking at 75%. February 11, 1950 to **New Zealand**. Three x 15 cents with three Type II cancels.

With Tea in the Sample Bag →

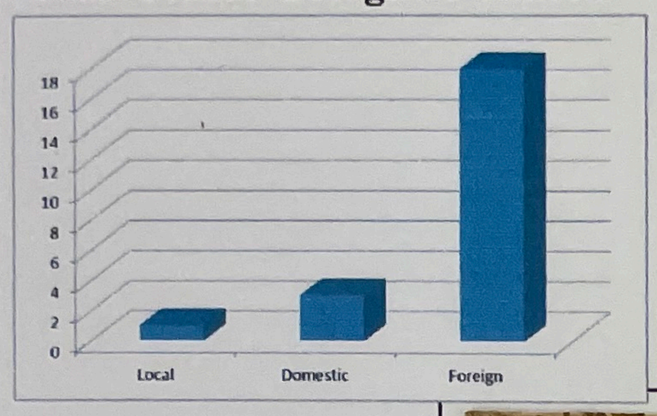
Actual weight with tea added only 1¼ oz.



E. King George VI

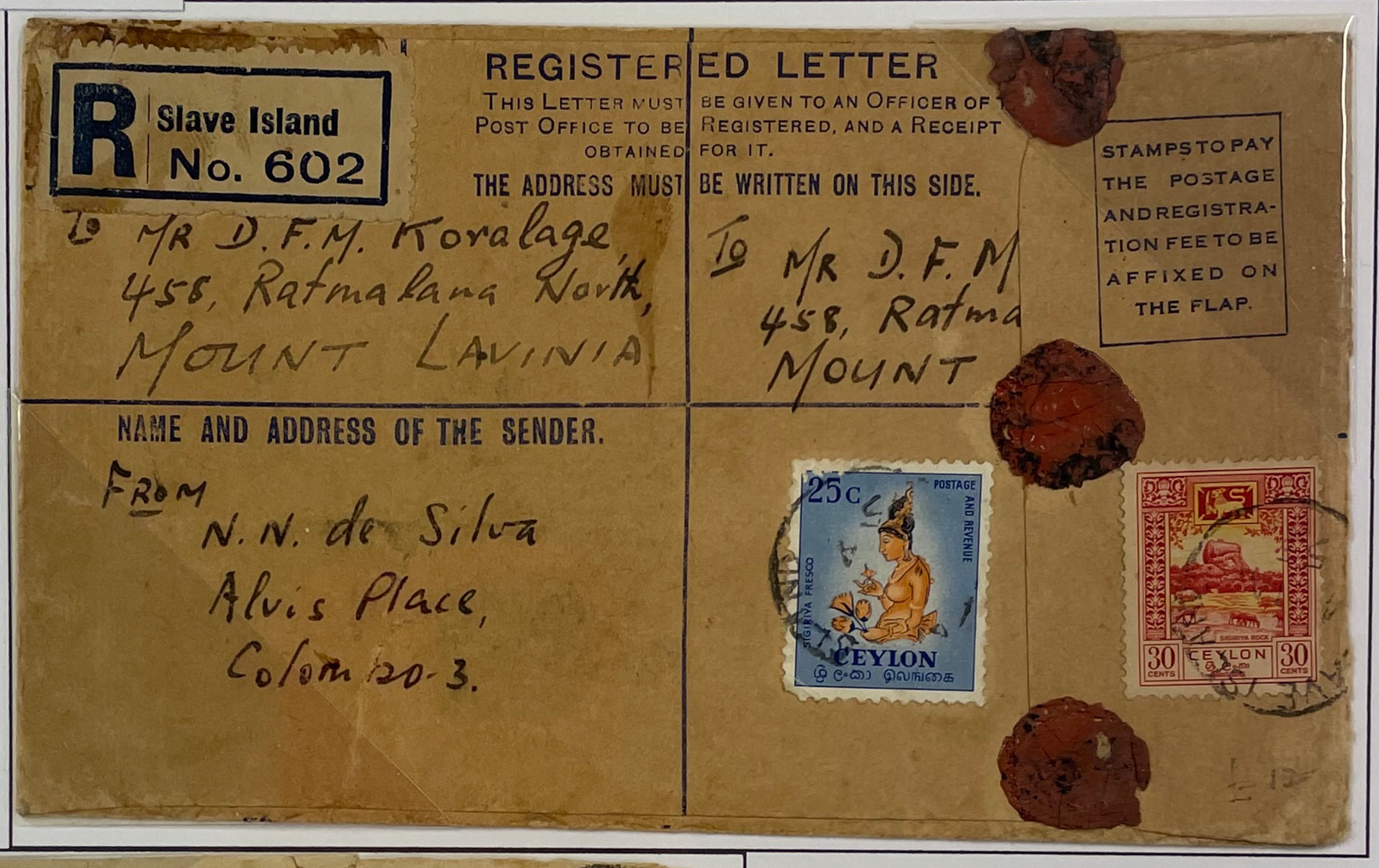
Foreign Airmail and Registered

Mail Census George VI Cancels



What happened to the local and domestic mail? The Colombo GPO change in policy is responsible. **Only special services mail** (airmail and registered as shown) presented at the counter **received Slave Island cancels**. All mail left at the Slave Island post for regular processing received a Colombo cancel.

55 cent domestic → Registered Type II, January 5, 1955. Sender return address is post "Colombo 3" but letter presented at Slave Island counter for processing.



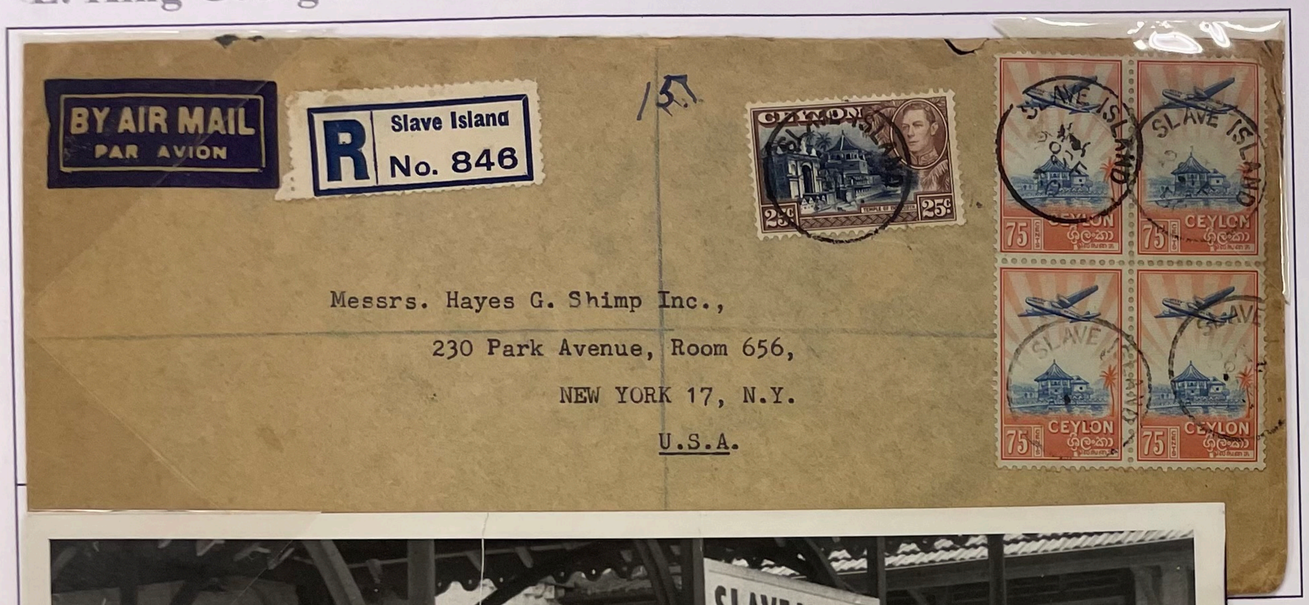


75 cent foreign Airmail to **Tanganyika, British East Africa**. March 2, 1955.

E. King George VI Slave Island

Foreign Airmail

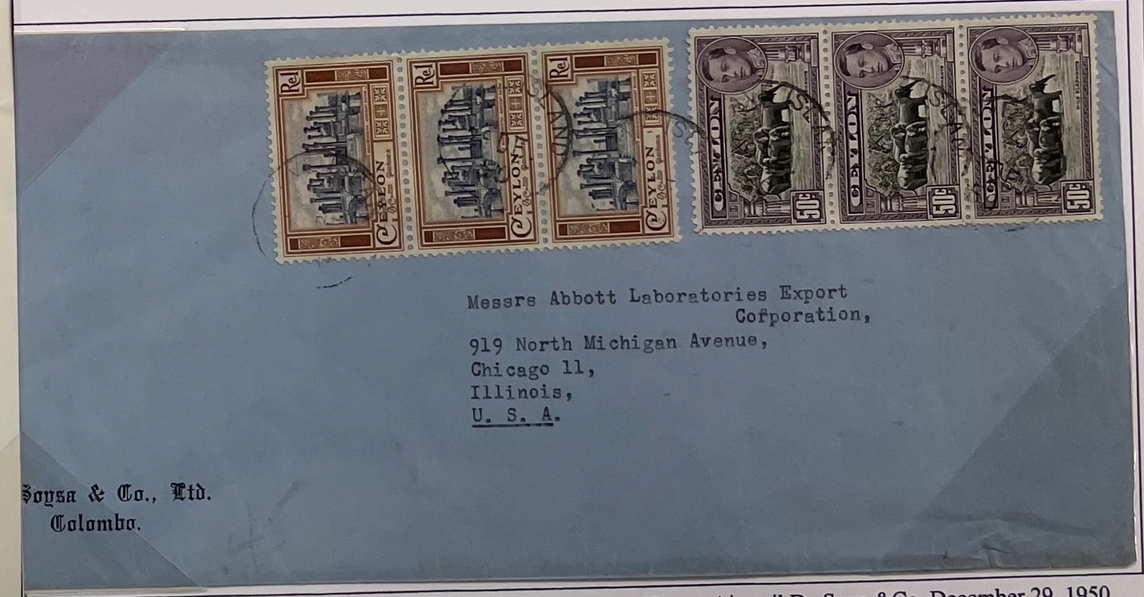
Business mail dominates from Slave Island shortly after independence. Regional unrest, especially in India, limited tourists coming to Ceylon. Slave Island's use changed again, to that of a business center.



← 3 Rs 25 cent
Registered Airmail
December 30, 1949
to **New York**,
5 Type II cancels.



1 Rs 50 cent →
Airmail sent
February 20, 1954
to **Cleveland, OH.**



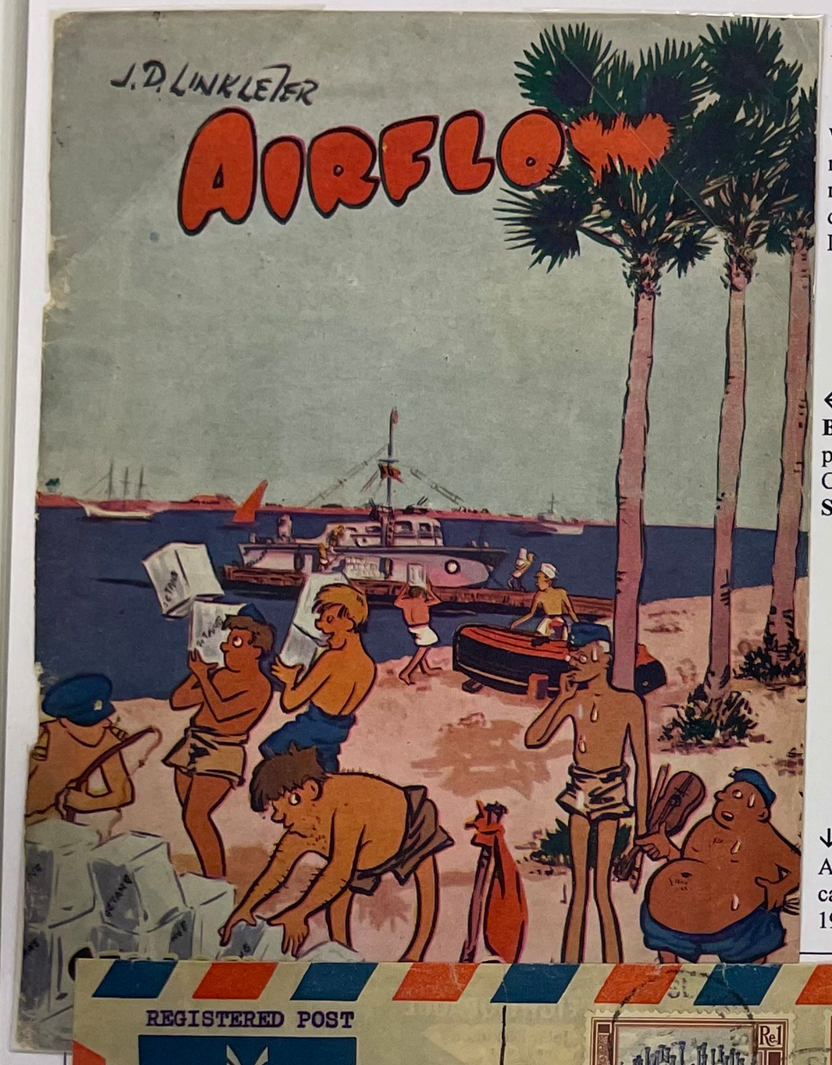
4 Rs 50 cent Airmail De Soya &Co December 29, 1950
to **Abbott Labs in Chicago** with 6 indistinct Type II cancels.



← Press Photo: **Railway Station at Slave Island,** April 3, 1956
Photographed by Raymond Copley, St. George, London.

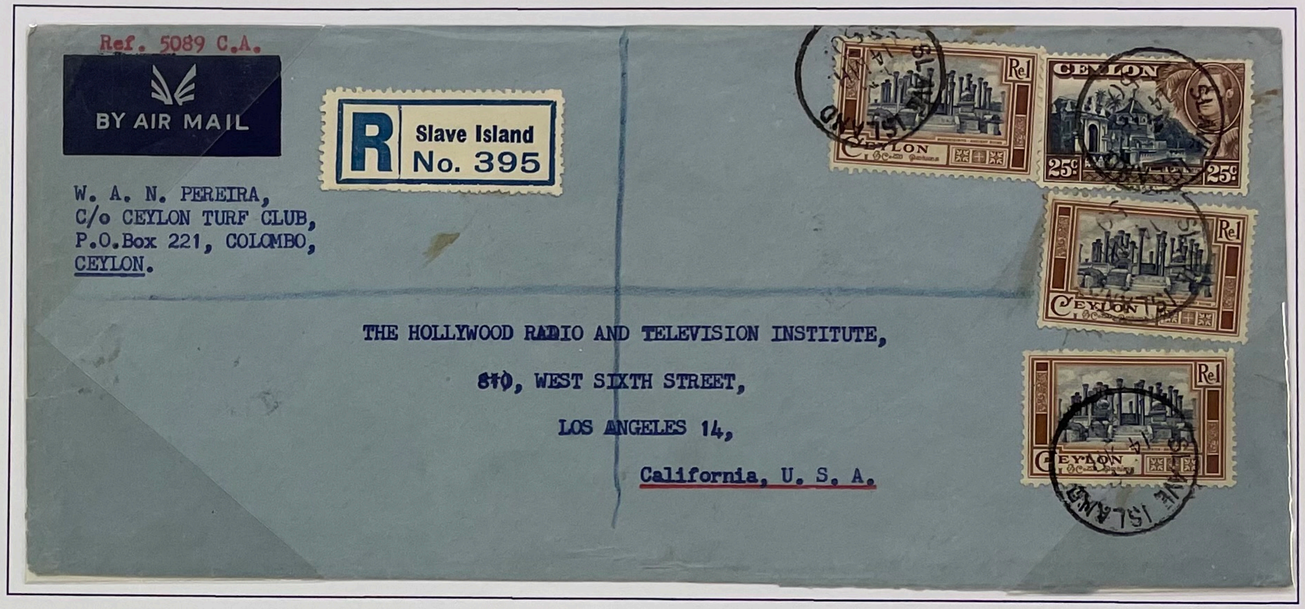
E. King George VI Slave Island

Foreign Registered Airmail



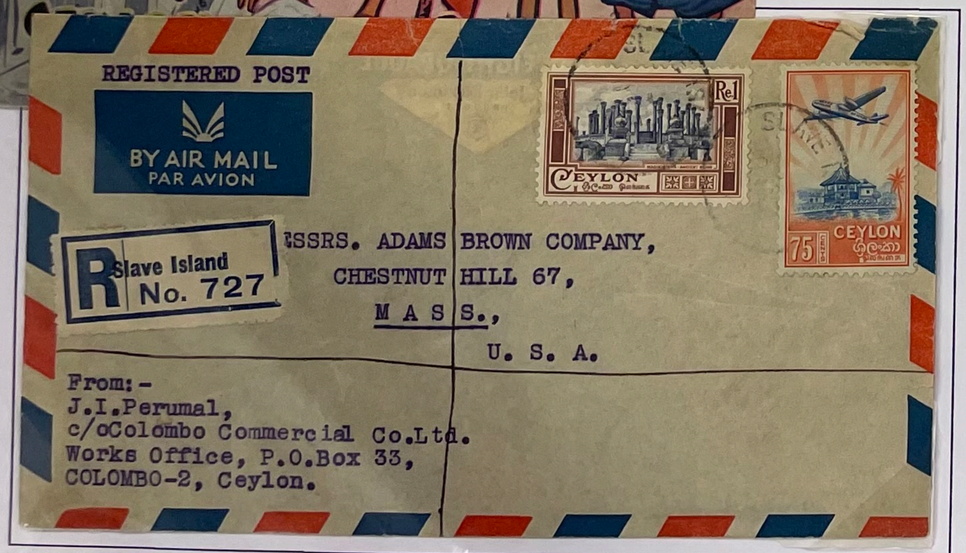
With the war over, normal business and recreation activities dominate the Slave Island mail stream.

← Airflow Cover **British RAF** Magazine peace time view across Colombo Harbor from **Slave Island**.

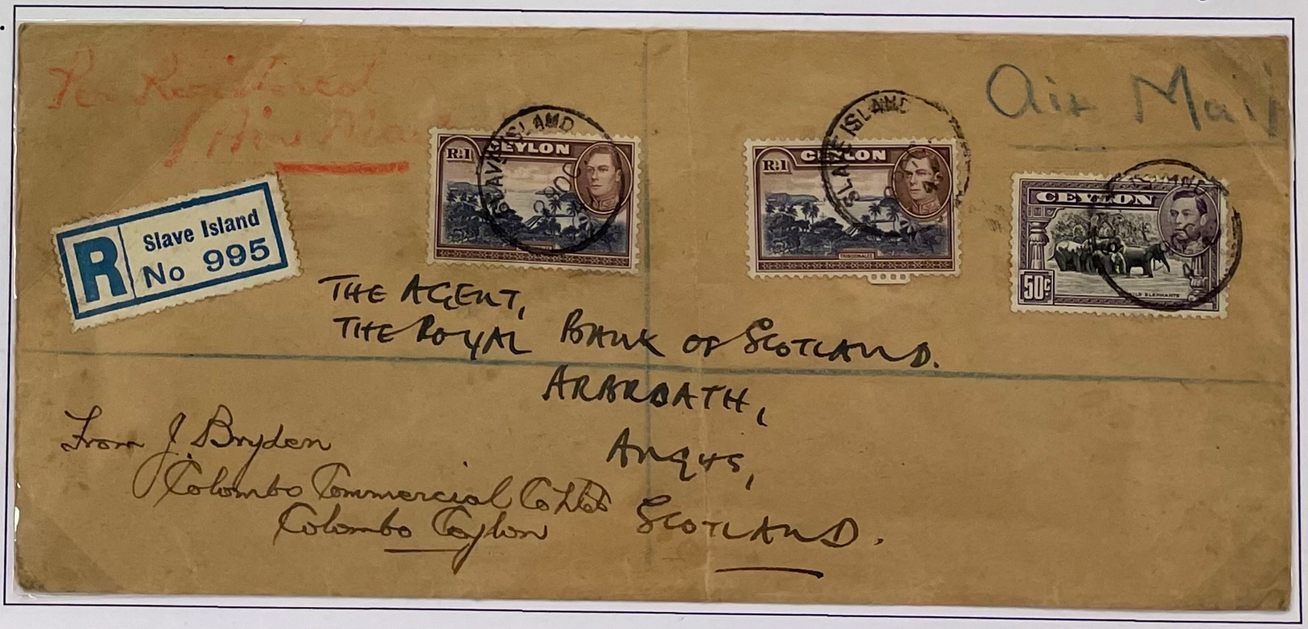


↑ 3 Rs 25 cent Registered Airmail from Ceylon Turf Club March 14, 1950 to **Hollywood Radio, Los Angeles** with 4 Type II cancels.

↓ 1 Rs 75 cent Registered Airmail with 2 Type II cancels. September 10, 1952 to **Massachusetts.**



↓ 2 Rs 50 cent Registered Airmail October 29, 1947 from Colombo Commercial Co. Ltd. to Royal Bank of **Scotland** with 3 Type II cancels.



↓ **Colombo Commercial:**
Purchased the former Slave Island Mess House of the Ceylon Rifles Corp. Merchants and agents on the island from early days of coffee, and later tea agents.

E. King George VI Slave Island — Registered Mail

New cancel type followed shortly after an earlier redesign. This cancel brings the "Slave Island" letterset off the ring more cleanly, and expands the cancel by three mm in diameter.

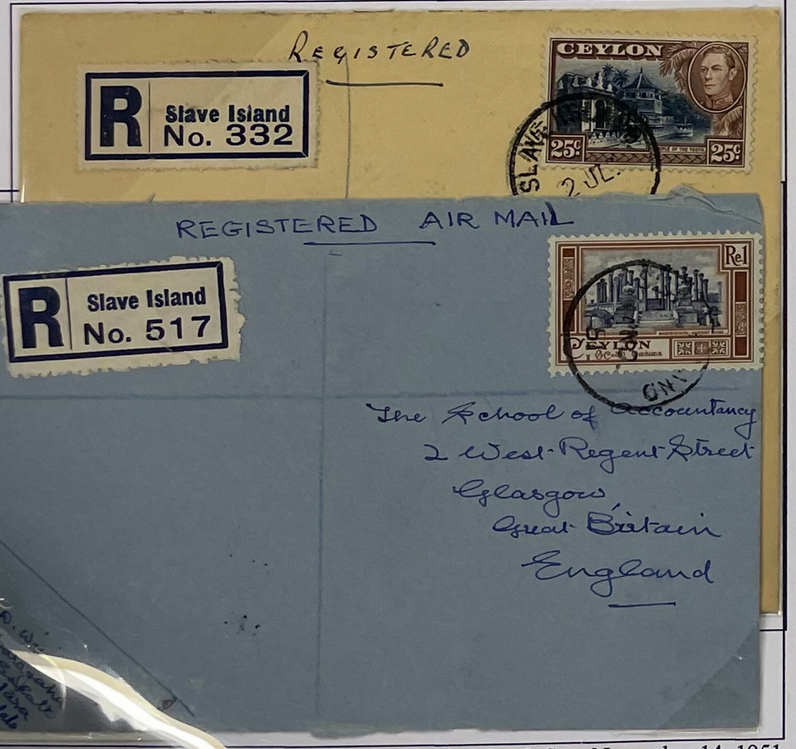
SLAVE ISLAND 28JL. 51

Type III:
September 28, 1950
to December 18, 1958
28 mm

Earliest Recorded Use →
1 Rs to **New Zealand**
September 28, 1950.
Extends Known Use by Ten Months.



Local →
Registered
July 2, 1951



1 Rs addressed as "Glasgow, Great Britain, England" for **Scotland**. Sent November 14, 1951 with Type III strikes front and reverse.

F. Queen Elizabeth II & Independence — Foreign Mail

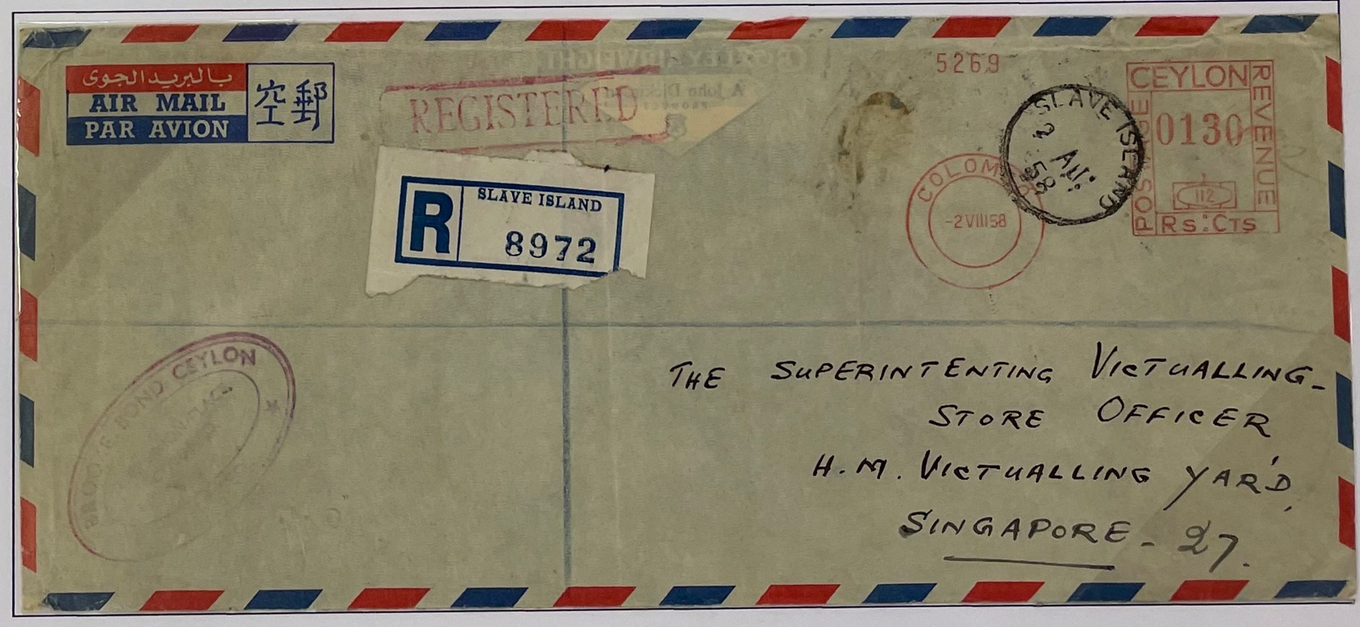
Ceylon peacefully became independent in 1948, remaining a dominion of the British Empire. As the Queen accession to the throne was in 1952, following Sri Lanka Independence, generally stamps of Sri Lanka do not the Queen's portrait.



1 Rs 25 cent Airmail
April 18, 1952 →
To Birmingham,
England.

Ceylon Independence
5 and 15 cent issues.

↓ Envelope metered by and commercially handstamped Brooke Bond Ceylon, Ltd., from 200 Union Place, a Slave Island address.



1 Rs 30 cent Registered Airmail, postmarked Slave Island Type III to **Singapore.**

F. Queen Elizabeth II & Independence



Type I:
Dates Range
28 mm

Two significant changes occurred during the reign of Queen Elizabeth II:

- English as the official language was joined initially by **Sinhalese**, later by **Tamil**
- **Ceylon officially became Sri Lanka** on May 22, 1972

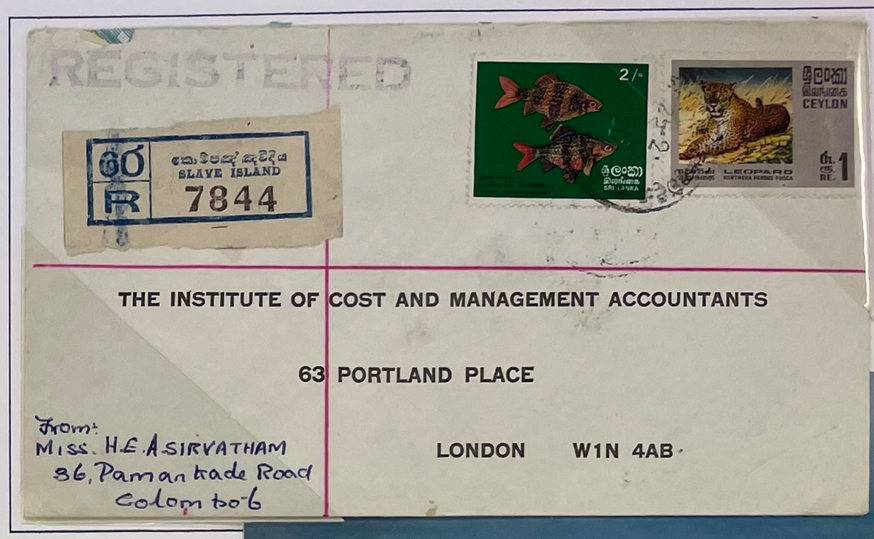
Cover bears the language transition, English names were phased out in favor of Sinhalese counterparts. English is secondary language on Registration, absent on the cancel.



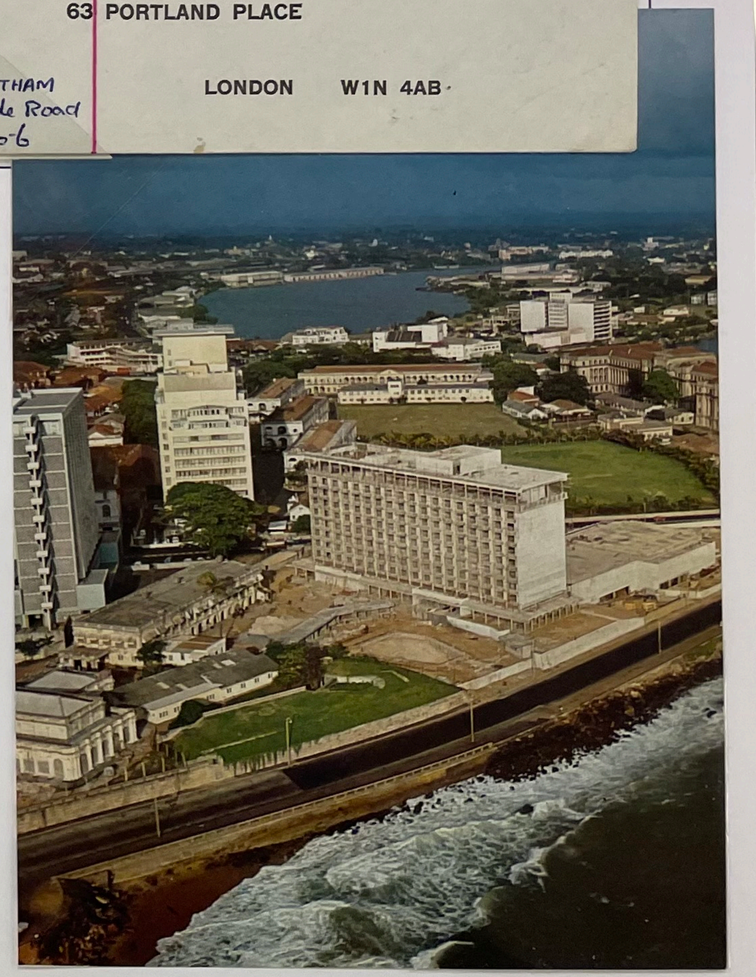
↑ Rs 3.80 Double Rate Airmail plus 70 cents Registration and postmarked Slave Island October 6, 1975, metered Colombo same day to **United Kingdom** with Type I cancels front and reverse.



5 Rs 35c Registered Airmail → March 22, 1974 to **West Germany** with Type I cancels front and reverse.



↑ 3 Rs Registered February 25, 1976 to **London** with Type I cancel.



1970s photo view from harbor, past central Colombo and Biera Lake showing **Slave Island, now situated ideally and engulfed within the city.**

F. Queen Elizabeth II & Independence

A large format double ring Slave Island cancel, with bilingual text.

Limited mail found with Slave Island cancels from the 1970s on:

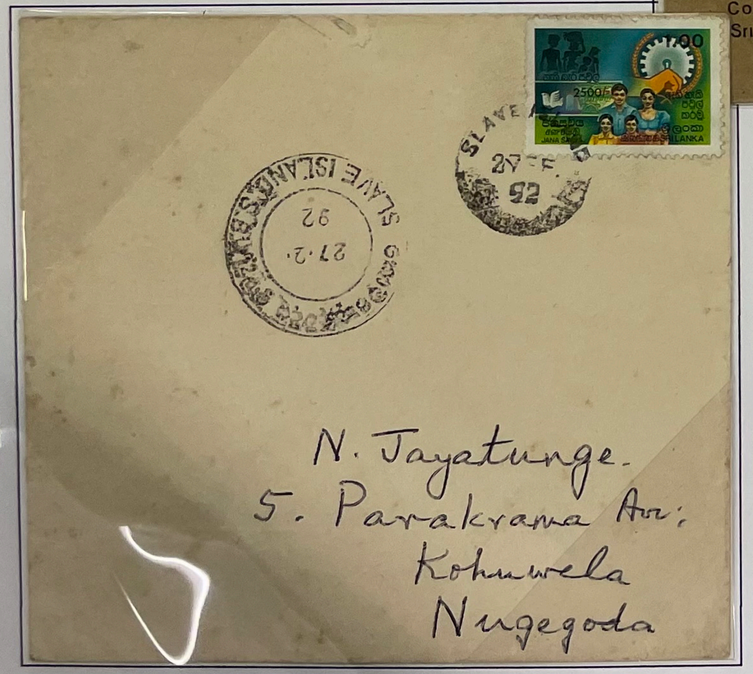
- Policy shift had mail processed primarily through the GPO.
- Tourist interest in visiting Sri Lanka dropped to a trickle during the many years of terrorism and civil war.



Type II:
Dates Range
1989-1992
35 mm



5.75 Rs domestic cover to Colombo.
Type II registered format cancel on November 17, 1987. →
Earliest Recorded Use
Scan from reverse above.



1 Rs domestic cover to Nugegoda.
Type II and a new Type III format cancel on February 27, 1992.



Meter mail in English and Sinhalese language.

Rs 8 Registered postmarked Slave Island April 4, 1993. Domestic Mail. **Cancel on Reverse**—3 cancels on seams for Registration.

Rs 10 Airmail postmarked Slave Island January 17, 1989. Sent to **United States.**

F. Queen Elizabeth II & Independence

Shortly after the mailing of this Registered Airmail, the Slave Island post office officially changed to its native Sinhalese name. In 1994, **the name on the Slave Island post office was taken down and replaced**.

Bearing a resemblance to earlier cancels, this Slave Island cancel was written in English and was rarely used.



Type III:
Dates Range
1991–
July 9, 1993

Latest Known Use →
Of Slave Island Type III cancel.
Rs 52 Registered Airmail postmarked Slave Island July 9, 1993. Colombo meter franking front and back.
Slave Island Registration & cancels.

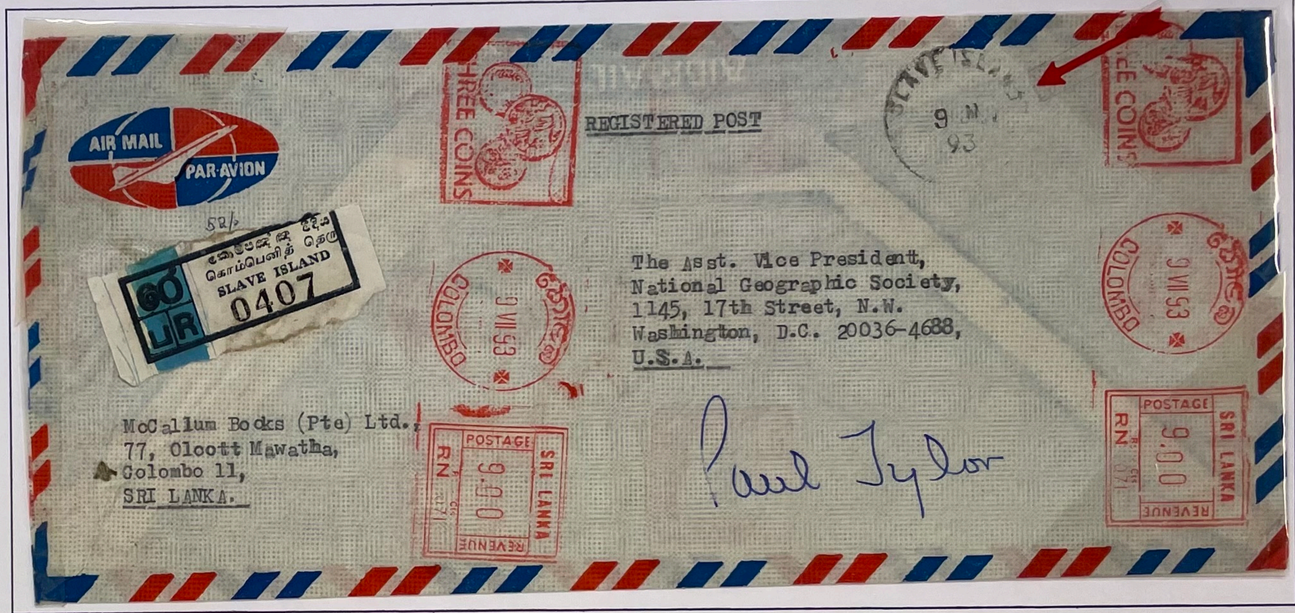
Commercial Evidence of Name Change
Registered domestic envelope mailed from the Slave Island post office as shown by the Registration label, and return address:
Union Trust & Investments
No. 347, Union Place
Colombo 2
Slave Island became Colombo 2 postal zone.↓



35 Rs Airmail Registered cover to **United States**.
Postmarked with Type III cancels on June 7, 1991.

"Slave Island" Post Office Name Ends

The Slave Island post office name was carried for over 114 years. The area today is still called Slave Island after much unsuccessful effort was made to move away from the pejorative name from the past.



↓The tri-lingual registration label showing Slave Island from holdover stock. Latest known use of any Slave Island indication on mail.



47 Rs Airmail Registered cover, August 9, 1999. **Final Slave Island cover known.**